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AMERICA THE MIXED CURSE

Andrew Kopkind



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AMERICA: THE MIXED CURSE



Andrew Kopkind writes:

I am a product (by-product?) of the 'silent' generation of Americans, which came of 'age' in the late 1950s. Our past will always, in some way, dominate our present. I started in a pre-medical course at Cornell University, but dropped out, and into philosophy by the time I got my bachelor's degree, in 1957. For a year and a half after that I worked as a cub reporter for the *Washington Post*, mostly on the night police beat. ('Give me a column if the victim is white,' the night city-editor would say, 'and three graphs if he's black.') From the summer of 1959 through the autumn of 1961 I lived in London, and completed an M.Sc. in international relations at the LSE. I came back to America from an 'exile' that was common in my generation, to find a new America I did not know had changed. My response was to take a job with *Time* magazine, as a correspondent in California. Three years later I went to Washington to become associate editor of the *New Republic*, where I stayed long enough to learn that the liberal establishment and the conservative establishment were effectively alike. From early 1967 until the present I have been working as a free-lance journalist in Washington, and writing a thrice-monthly column for the *New Statesman*. For the most part, my contributions go to the *New York Review of Books*, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, and *Ramparts*. With two other Washington reporters I started a new weekly political paper, *Mayday*, in October 1968. At last count, I was 33.

America: The Mixed Curse

Andrew Kopkind

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List of Abbreviations

The following alphabetical list of American abbreviations which appear in the text may not be familiar to the English reader:

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
ADA	Americans for Democratic Action
AFL	American Federation of Labor
AID	Agency for International Development
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Viet Nam
BOQ	Bachelor Officers' Quarters
CCNY	College of the City of New York
CEA	Council of Economic Advisers
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
CRS	<i>Corps Républicain Sécurité</i>
DFL	Democrat-Farmer-Labor
DMZ	Demilitarized Zone
FCC	Federal Communications Commission
FSM	Free Speech Movement
HEW	Health, Education and Welfare
IS-201	Intermediate School-201
NCNP	National Conference for New Politics
NLF	National Liberation Front (in Viet Nam)
NSA	National Student Association
PPBS	Planning-Programme-Budgeting-System
R and D	Research and Development
SANE	National Committee for a Sane Nuclear Policy
SCLC	Southern Christian Leadership Conference
SDC	Self-Determination Committee
SDS	Students for a Democratic Society
SLANT	Self-Leadership for All Nationalities Today
SNCC	Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee

For my mother and father

Introduction

There is nothing here about which I have not had second thoughts, or more. History makes political journalists look more foolish than even they deserve, and the history of America in the last three years has been particularly cruel to the craft. Personal caprice and precipitous change have conspired to falsify prophecies and undermine analyses; the true movements of this age are flailings of arms and bobbings of heads. Events overtake us all. Assassinations – as one too prevalent example – not only redirect history but distort biography: both Robert Kennedy and Martin Luther King became greater figures after their murders than they were before; the very act of assassination magnified their historical importance. Social inventions – to take another example – acquire unexpected meanings as they develop unintended consequences: the New Politics convention, in late summer, 1967, had a marginal significance as a novelty, but it took on profound importance a year later as the antecedent of events at the Democratic National Convention. Noises off – to complete the list of perils – not only distract, they often overwhelm the action on what appeared at first to be the centre stage. A combination of Têt Offensive and gold crisis gave the presidential primary campaign of Eugene McCarthy an impact it never would have had otherwise. In a similar way, the Russian-led invasion of Czechoslovakia refroze the thawing Cold War consensus in the US for reasons practically irrelevant to the earlier warming trends.

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All that is offered not as an apology for error but as a confession of confusion. It is hardly original to say that America has been in a state of extreme agitation in this generation. The fluidity of political and institutional relationships seems to increase exponentially month by month. Forces which were thought to have little in common one year appear interrelated the next, and their combined power increases according to some unsolved synergistic equation. In many ways not yet clearly understood, the black rebellion, the war in Vietnam, and the development of a post-industrial economy all interacted in the crucible of the mid-Sixties to produce an effect greater than the sum of those forces. For instance, the cost of pursuing the war (more than \$35 billion, all told, in 1968 alone) compelled cutbacks in even the modest programmes of the War on Poverty, thus sharpening the sense of exclusion in the black ghettos. At the same time, the hundreds of 'riots' (eighty-three died and the National Guard was called out eighteen times in the two midsummer months of 1967) and racial uprisings heightened tensions already produced by the war in Vietnam; the resultant sense of social crisis led to demands for 'law and order', which in turn drove blacks and whites even farther apart. Moreover, the revolt of students against corporate, military and academic bureaucracies (Dow Chemical, the Selective Service System, Columbia University) served as a model for adults who saw new opportunities for protest themselves against oppressive forces in the Catholic Church, in labour unions, and in local government. In September, 1968, several hundred parishioners walked out of Washington's Roman Catholic cathedral as Cardinal O'Boyle read a letter affirming Papal rules against birth control; it was a method of protest unthinkable in that particular social group before the experiences of the

Sixties: civil rights sit-ins, freedom rides, and anti-war marches. Ideological formulations have not been readily forthcoming, nor are they really necessary; action is self-legitimizing.

If there were doubts before, by the summer of 1967 it was evident enough that the breadth and depth of disfunction in American life could not be corrected by reforms aimed separately at one or another of the specific problems. The process of dissolution had gone too far. Education – probably the social institution most in need of repair, from pre-kindergarten through post-graduate school – can provide a brief case to study. The educational crisis is no longer amenable to reforms involving mere dollar-input or teacher up-grading (in the educationists' jargon) or even racial integration. What is wrong with schools is much more basic: it concerns what is wrong with the totality of American society. The schools are élitist, over-centralized and manipulative. They train pupils for docile lives in a valueless non-community. They perpetuate white racism not simply by physical segregation but by the structure of education itself: racial composition in schools is locked in with class composition, the ways of the white world take precedence over the ways of the black, and the ethic of 'success' is emphasized against loving, sharing, or simply being (see: *An Exchange on Racism*). Small attempts at reform in any one of those spheres bring massive retaliation. Campaigns to change school curricula in Californian towns have led to recall and replacement of local school boards; minor decentralization of schools' authority in one corner of New York City occasioned a city-wide teachers' strike and a new round of racial polarization.

But in some very important areas, American institutions seem still too invulnerable to allow a telling attack.

The 'military-industrial complex', which President Eisenhower named (and warned against) in his memorable farewell address, cannot be moved by simple sit-ins or marches. 'Community control' is an issue to be raised (though not yet won) against a local school board or political machine, but not against the steel industry. General Motors – in convenient alliance with the United Auto Workers – manages to keep its employees somewhat more loyal than Columbia University does its students. More and more, the huge corporate bureaucracies remove themselves and their functions from public view – let alone public control (see: *The Future Planners*) – and they get on with the job of the social fragmentation of their individual workers' lives (see: *Serving Time*). Those who intuit a necessity for building some measure of accountability into corporate empires hardly know where to begin; not only do they lack a strategy for reform, but they cannot even understand fully the nature of the 'system' they mean to change. In April, 1965, Paul Potter – the young president of the fledgeling Students for a Democratic Society – told America's first batch of anti-war marchers, gathered around the Washington Monument, to 'name the system, analyse it, and change it'. Four years later, there is still no agreement on a name.

Such difficulties are a consequence of the fluidity phenomenon: things are moving and shifting so rapidly that it is almost impossible to describe the total situation at any moment. We can only catch a glimpse as the action passes by. It occurred to me last spring (see: *The Thaw*) that if what was happening to America 'hardly constituted a revolution', then at least it seemed to 'follow Lenin's description of a revolutionary time in which things fall rapidly out of place and historical space is compressed'. In one way or another, the pieces in this collec-

tion represent glimpses of that American break-down – or crack-up. If together they do not constitute a movie, individually they are snapshots, probably blurred because the printing speed is not quite fast enough.

2

Two notions are repeated throughout these articles, as throughout these years in America. The first is *crisis*: in race relations, in political institutions, in national leadership, in foreign policy, in economic organization, in the quality of democracy. The other is *resistance*: of black militants, white radicals, suburban liberals, the Vietnamese, Doctor Levy, and the uneasy, mind-hassled millions of Lower Middle America. The crisis of the society is expressed in their resistance, but the resistance did not cause the crisis. White racism was prevalent before Watts, the advancing empire was ruinous before Vietnam, violence was immanent in the American character before Chicago. The black insurgents, the Vietcong and the anti-war demonstrators did not manufacture the evils they opposed. They brought those evils into sharp relief when mediating influences proved incapable finally of keeping the images hazy.

To talk about America in this time, then, is to chronicle the failure of those mediators – the institutions of 'liberalism' in its political form which were dominant from the New Deal through the first year of the Great Society. In their last incarnations they were the anti-poverty programmes, the peace offensives, the urban renewal projects, the counter-insurgency schemes, the foreign aid grants, the anti-segregation laws, the McCarthy campaign, the 'dove' candidacies, the 'politics of joy'. All of them sought to reduce the real conflicts of

American life, and all of them were inadequate. The rising sense of hopelessness and helplessness this summer – the widespread fear that there were no more ‘alternatives’ – followed from the realization that those mediating forces were out of commission.

Some brief and summary history may set the context. ‘Liberalism’ as a social force – involving both ideology and programme – became secured in the US political establishment with the coming of the New Deal, in the early Thirties. Although there were plenty of antecedents in Populism, Progressivism and perhaps American socialism, New Deal liberalism was a specific response to the economic crisis of depression and the political crisis of unionism, and it had its distinct characteristics. By the time of mobilization for the Second World War, liberals had succeeded in making labour organizing a legitimate pastime, but despite New Deal economic ‘reforms’, they had largely failed to solve most of the deeper problems of production and distribution. The war economy made further action along that line unnecessary – and it made liberalism irrelevant. By the early Forties, liberals were out of the top policy-making jobs. After the war, explosive consumer demand, the Baby Boom, and then Cold War ‘defence’ needs kept the economy surging along, with only temporary setbacks. Unions built on their pre-war gains and consolidated strength. The net effect of the New Deal (and its sinister heir, the Fair Deal of Harry Truman) had been to increase the political power of unionized labour while maintaining the basic ratios of income distribution from the pre-Roosevelt days. It was, surely, ‘reform’ of a kind – and the last in this century.

What happened after that was retrenchment. Beginning with the Eisenhower administration, labour as a class started losing power to big corporations, which were

supported by a stratum of managers and a structure of governmental, military and academic bureaucrats (they may *look* like professors or colonels or deputy assistant secretaries for urban affairs, but appearances do not alter their essential bureaucratic function). Economic growth was assured by a complex and for the most part unplotted series of events, developments and manipulations: competition with the Soviet Union, anti-communist ideology, defence expenditure, protection and development of spheres of influence, foreign aid, corporate mergers, welfareism, the 'Contract State' system. Taken one by one, those phenomena might be pleasant or nasty; all together, they constructed an imperial system whose effect is now almost universally thought to be oppressive.

Anti-communism provided the ideological rationale for the enormous Cold War (and later Hot War) budgets: the sum is now up to \$80 billion, by official reckoning. Whatever the amount, it was enough to ward off deep recession and depression. The New Deal liberals, and their newer recruits, provided the intellectual formulations for anti-communism (see: *The Big Fix*) and picked out old Reds and radicals as human sacrifices to the anti-communist gods. It was, after all, Hubert Humphrey – in those days the liberals' liberal – who sponsored the Communist Control Act of 1954, as 'McCarthyist' a law as any honest reactionary ever promoted. Like established trade unionists beside their bosses, the Humphrey clan were liberal lieutenants of reaction. For the most part, the liberals kept alive during the Fifties and prepared themselves for new influence in the Sixties by maintaining an anti-radical stance. They filled the foundations, the universities and the CIA. Those happy homes were not only sanctuaries for victims of McCarthyism; they were active rehabilitation centres.

Defence is only one component of the great corporate

expansion formula, and anti-communism only one ideological ground. The consolidation of a worldwide 'sphere of influence' for American economic penetration provides pretty profits for American companies (in South Africa, for instance, US firms earn two to ten times more than they do in the competitive domestic market) as well as outlets for accumulated earnings; no amount of earnest post-Marxian revisions can wash away those figures. The basis of American economic penetration overseas changes from place to place, and there are large differences now from the needs of earlier imperial times (see: *America's Empire in Revolt*). Aid to developing societies is advantageous in any number of ways: it promises new markets for American-made goods as well as for products of overseas American corporations; it promotes the political relationships the US likes to call 'stability'; it opens up areas for American investment; it provides some protection against competition from other countries, East or West; and it spreads 'Americanism' with every bag of cement and Coke bottle. 'Development is security', Robert McNamara said in Montreal in 1966. It should be taken as the marching slogan (epitaph, too?) of the American empire.

The political basis of imperial expansion was formulated during John Kennedy's first years, after a long period of haphazard application by Eisenhower and Dulles. Kennedy's outline was devilishly simple: under an umbrella of 'détente' on the major big-power issues, the US would go about creating the conditions for stability and development in its influence spheres. The entire American hemisphere was inviolable (thus, the Cuban missile crisis), as was Western Europe. Parts of Southeast Asia and the Pacific littoral were securely in the American bag, and Southern Africa as well. Eastern Europe – except

for Yugoslavia – was assigned to Moscow, although in a show of exceptionally poor form, some American businessmen became greedy for Czechoslovakia last spring, and hoteliers, bankers, and insurance representatives swarmed into Prague during the 'liberalization'. Other bits and pieces of the world were recognized as 'contested' or free-play areas.

In the uncontested parts, the US can do what it will to shape its favourite politics. If an oppressive dictatorship threatens to detonate a revolutionary uprising, the dictator is deposed or disposed of. If a mildly 'liberal' democrat proves unable to keep the revolutionary force mollified, a military *coup* is countenanced, encouraged or plotted. If a liberal runs against a radical for electoral office, the campaign of the former suddenly has Washington gold to spend. In Africa, the CIA can as easily buy up revolutionary organizations as shore up colonial powers, whichever promises to keep the final revolution from happening. All the while, Special Forces, political advisers, CIA airlines, Aid teams, English teachers, Peace Corpsmen, and other battalions of the imperial command are deployed. And just in case all these subtle means fail, the Marines and the airborne divisions are in training, the B-52s are loading up, the Polaris submarines are ploughing the ocean depths. From the Peace Corps volunteer to the SAC bomber pilot, from the aluminium plant in West Africa to the defoliation programme in Southeast Asia, American foreign policy has many aspects but only one purpose.

The domestic counterpart to imperial expansion has been the extension (from antecedents over several decades) of the political economy of corporatism (see: *The Future-Planners*). An advanced technological system needs advance-planning and a kind of centralized control

which free-market capitalism cannot readily provide. Of course, there has been no 'free market' in America since the trust-busting days at the turn of the century (at least), and the controls of the New Deal – while far from commanding the heights – should have ended the economic myth of American free enterprise forever (it's a shame the Libermans and Siks don't see that, too). But neither has there been acceptance of the concept of central planning. In its absence, methods were developed by large corporations and government bureaux to simulate the planning function. Corporations are going somewhat mad with 'diversification', buying up smaller companies to form industrial complexes producing everything from atomic subs to lollipops – and doing much of the work for government defence and welfare agencies. The 'Contract State' system allows corporations to plan – in the privacy of their own research and development shops – for their needs far into the future (see: *Serving Time*). The trick is to make 'R and D' so sophisticated, to invent such compelling advertising, to plot such brilliant marketing methods – that public policy will be forced to follow corporate forward planning.

In social terms, the consequence of corporatism is the creation of 'post-industrial' or 'technological man'. He is materially comfortable and reasonably well-educated according to the educational norms of the system. But he has a whole new set of neuroses that cannot be assuaged in the existing institutional system. He pines over his lack of participation in the processes and policies which seem to control his life, but he can see no way to share even a measure of power. He is told that his material possessions give him security, but he remains insecure. Something is wrong; as Dylan sings, 'You know somethin's happening, but you don't know what it is, do you, Mr Jones?' Who

deprives him of the full enjoyment of his comfort: the Reds? the Hippies? the Blacks? the Taxman? the Finance Company? the Intellectuals? Promised the earth, he has only a few clods – on the instalment plan (see: *Reagan, Ex-Radical*). He has possessions but no sense of his community, an education but no culture of humane values. Better the Stones than Dylan: 'I Can't Get No Satisfaction.'

If the position of post-industrial man is ambiguous, the role of those excluded entirely from the benefits of the system is all too clear. They know what's happening; they can't get jobs *or* satisfaction. The vast majority of America's black and Spanish-speaking people are not even important enough to be exploited in the classical way; they are a drag on the wheels of advancing technology. The 'culture of poverty' does not permit many of them to be educated for technological and managerial jobs, even if those jobs existed, which they don't. The problem is seen to be their disposition in society. Those well-placed in the élite classes who happen to have a charitable bent would like to see the excluded underclass (including millions of poor whites) paid off with welfare cheques and kept as clean and quiet as possible. Others, more fearful, fantasize more drastic solutions. But no one has thought of ways to 'open' the system to their participation.

3

Like bacteria in mould, the germs of resistance grow in that context of crisis. Certainly other industrial societies are experiencing some or all of the same phenomena in various and attenuated forms. But the lead of America – as a product of its mass, its wealth, its power and its originality – is undoubted. A difference of degree is in itself

a difference in kind; no other country has cut its ties with pre-technological social organization so sharply.

In the Fifties, there seemed to be little hope for most people of breaking through the nets of control. For one thing, it was difficult to discern the outlines of a system which was forming before one's very eyes. For another, there were no institutions through which that vision could be acquired – that is, no methods for systematic radicalization (see: *Doctor's Plot*). But by the end of that decade, the first assaults were being made. In 1956, Dr King led the Montgomery bus boycott, and although it proved something of a dead-end as far as the Negro movement was concerned, it had effects in other areas. In 1957, a radical political organization was formed at Berkeley – the precursor of the student movement. In 1958, there was a prototype 'student riot' at Cornell, aimed at exactly the issues which would inflame whole continents ten years later: centralization of authority, removal of responsibility for student affairs from student agencies, mindless expansionism, irrelevance to the social problems of the community, bureaucratic anonymity. In 1960, the silent generation began to shout. In San Francisco there were battles with the police on the steps of the Federal Building in protest against investigations by the House Un-American Activities Committee. In the same year, the campaign to stop the execution of Caryl Chessman reached its peak in California. (Not for nothing has that state been the centre of protest; it epitomizes the new technological society and contains all its alienating characteristics.) Perhaps most important of all, twelve black students, all in their teens or twenties, sat-in at a lunch counter in Greensboro, North Carolina, in February of that year. That one scene symbolized the entire thrust of the American resistance. It was a simple,

non-violent, personalized act of existential protest, by excluded people who wanted to be included, against a 'white power structure' that could not be moved by conventional political means. In time, calm sit-ins progressed to bloody freedom-rides and violent uprisings, as student protests went from marches to occupations of whole campuses and street fighting with police (see: *Soul Power*). The inspiration of Camus and Dr King was overpowered by the examples of Malcolm X and Che Guevara. In the beginning, integration was a promise and revolution was a fantasy; now integration is the fantasy. But the basic political statement remained the same in Greensboro and Watts and Chicago: 'Take me seriously. LISTEN!'

Nineteen-sixty was the watershed year. Most Americans will remember it as the year John Kennedy was elected president, but his contribution to the social upheaval was ambiguous indeed. At once, he provided targets for attack, rhetoric for action, and institutions for radicalization. His election was fought and won on the promise of government cooperation in corporatist economics (Goldwater's threat to that system was largely responsible for his defeat in 1964). Kennedy made America safe for neo-Keynesianism. Under his Administration, the US involvement in Vietnam changed from a desultory CIA operation to a proper counter-revolutionary war. Kennedy and his 'Harvard Marxists' invented the Green Berets, and it is a just tribute to that creation that the special warfare training centre at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, is named in Kennedy's memory. But the young president also appealed to the longing for participation and recognition which he found everywhere on his campaign trail – among students, Negroes, and the masses of Middle America. At times, he gave his appeal rather spurious

twists ('ask not what your country can do for you ...') but the essential message came through. For more lasting effect, Kennedy constructed the vehicles in which people could get close enough to the contradictions of the system to feel their searing injustice; more often than not, they were so traumatized by that experience that they 'joined' the resistance – psychologically, if not organizationally. In that way, the Peace Corps, the Appalachian relief programmes, the education and job-training projects, and the wider War on Poverty (which Kennedy was planning at the time of his death) have produced more 'radicals' in this generation and more resisters than all the parties of the Left.

Under the strain of resistance, from mild to militant, the crisis-ridden Old Order began to break. The coalition which held political power since the New Deal could not coordinate the needs and interests of its constituents under the new pressures (see: *The McCarthy Campaign*). Attempts were made to salvage the old Democratic labour-liberal-minorities bloc (see: *The Importance of Kennedy*), but with Robert Kennedy's murder, there was no one available to pull it all together. Kennedy was probably America's last liberal politician who could appeal strongly to all the old elements. After him, there was no hope of Democratic synthesis – at least in 1968. George Wallace picked up Kennedy's Northern working-class base to attach to his Southern Populist-Poujadist campaign (see: *Wallace*). Humphrey tried to hold on to the more terrified liberals and those industrial workers who still cared about union issues. Nixon followed the traditional formula of presidential elections: run on the other guy's platform – and moved to include Wallace's and Humphrey's hawks and racists in his own self-styled 'New Coalition'. From July to September, 1968, the Ame-

rican political centre of gravity moved several degrees to the right (see: *Nixon's Deal*).

The new politics of resistance has not been much more successful than the old politics of the system. Historically anarchic and sectarian, militant liberals and radicals also face the immensely difficult (perhaps insoluble) problems of racial and generational conflict (see: *They'd Rather Be Left* and *An Exchange on 'Racism'*). The impossible mixture of liberal élitists, middle-class radicals and black activists at the New Politics convention had no internal chemistry of cohesion; it would have been astonishing if the elements had not all separated violently. They found their natural levels the following year, around the same hotels and auditoriums in the same city of Chicago. Appropriately on that second occasion, the liberals were inside the halls and the hotels (and inside the Democratic Party) working for Eugene McCarthy; the white radicals were outside in the streets; and the blacks were cooling it in another country, in a different region of their soul. No organizational form has yet been devised to unite resistance on the Left, at least as competently as the Wallace campaign seemed to be doing it on the Right.

4

What happened in Chicago in August, 1968, was shocking out of all proportion to its physical extent. Some hundreds of demonstrators (and journalists) were assaulted by police bullies; no one was killed or gravely injured. The Democratic Party managed to mount a more or less conventional campaign. Mayor Daley held his ground and kept his local support. The Un-American Activities Committee began its predictable investigation. General Motors put out its autumn line of automobiles. The stock

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market reached a record high for the year in mid-September. All the economic indicators were up. But Chicago – coming as the latest in a long series of reactions to a limitless complex of pressures – compelled discussion of the most profound and abhorrent political questions. For the first time, people began to talk seriously of ‘revolution’ and ‘fascism’ and such cataclysms that half a year before were not even considered legitimate issues in conversation. Although it was hard to believe that radical changes at that level were about to occur, the *perception* of their imminence (or possibility) introduced an important new condition. In politics, as in love, thinking really can make it so.

That even the possibility of convulsive change exists is evidence of the enormous well of energy beneath the surface (see: *All Systems Fail*). But like a lot else in America, even that is a mixed curse. Doctors say that a young and vigorous man who happens to contract cancer will often die in a matter of weeks, while an old and feeble patient can linger for years. The disease progresses at the same rate as the body’s metabolism. Nations do not die in the same way, of course; the social and human organism are not identical. But we can see now how corruption spreads even through beauty and strength. America is corrupt, beautiful and strong. To be ‘anti-American’ would mean to reject it all: the kids with the cops, the underground press with the TV networks, hard rock with Muzak, Harlem with Scarsdale, the High Sierra with the automobile graveyards. Perhaps there is a little time left to choose one set or the other.

Washington, September 1968

Too Late in the Ghetto

The American 'Resistance' begins – and may end— with the movement of black people (until recently, called 'Negroes') against the system of white privilege. Blacks do not have to be 'radicalized' to see their oppressors; they have only to be organized to do battle. That is a slow and tortuous process, and blacks must do it themselves, according to their own needs and in response to the realities of white racism. Doctor King's non-violent protest was an unrealistic response to a conscience-less, unyielding 'power structure': it brought movement but no progress, and the direct consequence was the explosion of rebellion, from Watts to Washington.

Watts

New Republic 12.6.66

Toward the end of these warm, dusty spring afternoons, small knots of men begin to form at street corners, in front of liquor stores and pool halls, and on the stoops of shabby houses all over south central Los Angeles – a vast, undefined area which is 'Watts' to everyone who doesn't live there. School is out; jobs are over. It has been another day of frustration and failure and, overall, boredom. Students and the marginally employed mix with the drop-outs, the permanently idle and the hustlers. The whites – merchants and social workers, mostly – scurry home to the western and northern suburbs. What is left is the police and 'us'.

Ten months after the riots or the revolt (depending on where or who you are), Watts is still in a state of siege. The police keep order by their numbers, the extent of their weaponry, and the sophistication of their tactics. They cruise the avenues all night long, breaking up gatherings, arresting as many as possible, searching everyone who looks suspicious. And almost everyone looks suspicious. Few men in Watts do not know how to spread-eagle against a wall or a police car; they have learned from experience.

From time to time the siege is broken. In March, two people were killed in an extended battle that some people call 'Watts II'. Now, the incidents hardly rate front-page treatment. Deep in the *Los Angeles Times* are stories such as the one last week that began: 'Angry crowds hurled rocks and bottles at police in two Negro areas of the city

early Saturday. . . .’ The tension is below the surface, but there is an almost universal belief another ‘explosion’ is inevitable.

It is that belief, as much as anything, that could produce ‘Watts III’. Both sides are girding-up for war. The police have developed new anti-riot tactics: at the call of ‘Code 77’ (the Watts precinct number) they move out in troop carriers bristling with shotguns. The young Negroes of the ghetto have their battle plans, too: gangs are organized to converge on one preselected target, then scatter in souped-up cars and regroup at the next unannounced site for another attack. Naturally, neither side wants to be the first to charge. But in the context of a mounting arms race (there are rumours that Molotov cocktails are being prepared and cached, and most Negro men have guns) an ‘accident’ could trigger a fresh revolt.

It almost happened last month. On 7 May, police officer Jerold M. Bova shot and killed a Watts Negro, Leonard Deadwyler, after a forty-block auto chase up Avalon Boulevard. Deadwyler’s pregnant wife claimed she was having labour pains and her husband was speeding her to the hospital (the car had a white handkerchief, as a signal of distress, tied to the radio antenna). Bova said he was justified in stopping the car (his cruiser forced it to a halt) and approaching the passengers with a loaded .38 revolver. Bova reached in through the window of the passenger’s side, across Mrs Deadwyler, and stuck the gun in the Negro’s side. The next instant Deadwyler was shot. Bova claimed the car ‘lurched’ and the gun discharged accidentally. Mrs Deadwyler said Bova was negligent. The Negroes of Watts called it murder.

There were rallies and rioting after the killing, and an ad hoc ‘Committee to End Legalized Murder by the Cops’

was set up. Two *Newsweek* reporters covering a riot at a liquor store were beaten. Then the police moved in and 'busted' four young Negroes who seemed to be among the ringleaders. One of them, Tommy Jacquette, was picked up for 'suspicion of robbery', but by the time the police were through, that charge was dropped and he was booked for 'inciting a riot', and three other attendant charges. The arrests did not do much to reduce tensions; predictably, they had the opposite effect. White social workers and sympathetic white journalists were warned by their Negro friends to keep clear of Watts.

The coroner's inquest into the Deadwyler case lasted eight days. Last week the nine-man jury (in good Hollywood style it included one Negro, one Oriental, one woman) found the homicide 'accidental', and the district attorney dropped the case. But the Negroes in Watts were not in a charitable mood. Tuesday night, they went on a window-smashing rampage.

A lot of chickens (in a phrase much appreciated in Watts) are coming home to roost. No matter how such incidents may be explained in white society, every time a white man kills a Negro (or is even mildly disrespectful, for that matter) the difficulty of building an integrated community becomes that much closer to impossibility. As it is, black alienation from white Los Angeles is almost total.

What is 'happening in Watts' – the question everyone here asks – is a strong surge of the black nationalist tide. It is a logical response to the conditions of the ghetto: the powerlessness of the Negro, and the unwillingness of the whites to move toward 'integration' on anything more than a token basis. The McCone Commission Report – issued last December to explain the nature of the August revolt and suggest some kinds of solutions – was dis-

couragingly inadequate on both counts. It placed much of the responsibility on the Negro, who couldn't cope with 'the conditions of city life' (Bayard Rustin pointed out that the city couldn't cope with the conditions of Negro life). There were some things that the city could do to help out: build a hospital, run a bus line through Watts to employment centres, put cafeterias and libraries in the all-Negro schools. But at bottom, the Report seemed to say, the conflict was some sort of communications breakdown; nothing wrong that a human relations commission and some bricks and mortar couldn't cure.

The McCone solutions have not yet been implemented, although there are bond issues on the ballot this month for school improvements and a new hospital. One new bus line has received federal funds, and there are some human relations committees floating around. But it would be hard to find a Negro in Los Angeles who has the slightest faith that the Report's recommendations, even if they were all effected, could make a significant difference in ghetto life. 'There's been a complete failure of white leadership,' a white businessman active in civic affairs told me. 'No one understands that the Negroes can't stand being second-class citizens any more. Patching up living conditions or finding a few people jobs won't help.'

The nationalist 'reaction' focuses on that state of second-classness. There had been a base of nationalist feeling before that: the Muslims had a large and militant membership, and they had had violent battles with the police. But the August revolts charged the entire Negro population with that sense of 'black power' that combines dignity, pride, hatred of whites and Negro brotherhood.

In Watts, there is no single form for its expression. There are organizations like SLANT (Self-Leadership

for All Nationalities Today), Us (a somewhat cultish but powerful following of Malcolm X), the Black Muslims, the Afro-American Citizens' Council, the Self-Determination Committee, the Afro-American Culture Association and more. It is hard to estimate their numbers (S L A N T, which is Tommy Jacquette's group, has about 500 young members), but the important point is not members but sentiment. They catch the deepest aspirations in the ghetto, and they can command the 'troops' when the crisis comes.

Nationalist feeling goes beyond these particular clubs. It permeates even the 'moderate' institutions – the self-help organizations, the community development agencies, the Teen Posts. Many of them are moving to all-black staffs; whites are relegated to minor posts, as helpers or 'resource people'.

'What's happening in Watts is what's happening in the rest of America,' a nationalist leader told me. 'The ghetto is no promised land. There are no jobs to be integrated into. There's no way to move to the so-called integrated areas. The accepted liberal means don't work. The white power structure has no intention of giving up anything without demands, and power yields only to power. I want to see black people organized for power – now. There are enough black people in Los Angeles right now to have a great amount of power *as blacks*. Every other ethnic group in America did it – the Jews, the Italians, the Irish, all of them. The black people have to do it even more, because they were slaves and they started with absolutely no power at all. The feeling is there, though the organizational unity isn't there yet. But the only healthy sign is the feeling of black unity, the feeling that people will have to look to themselves for the solution to their problems.'

There is no single ideological line for 'black nationalism'. SLANT's Tommy Jacquette, for instance, calls himself 'more liberal' than others because he sees nationalism as a more or less temporary stage: black men (they all disdain the 'slave' word 'Negro') have to build up their own community before integration is anything more than continued subservience. Jacquette does not isolate himself from whites; but if they want to help, he recommends that they work in their own worlds, trying to force changes within white society that could allow Negroes acceptance as equals.

But the line moves quickly to extreme positions. As it does, behaviour as well as philosophy becomes more removed from white standards. Leaders of Us wear green felt 'bubas' (a sort of poncho, of no particular national origin) to set themselves apart (their followers sometimes wear Malcolm X sweatshirts). 'Black' is the common referent for all that is good or true. There are black holidays (Malcolm's Birthday, the Sacrifice of Malcolm, Uhuru Day), black language (Swahili), black schools (teaching 'soul', nationalist doctrine), black history and, in a sense, black logic.

'You can't mix with the power structure that you're going to deal with,' Us's Chief, Ron Karenga, explains. Karenga, a 24-year-old graduate student (African linguistics) at UCLA, speaks with a biting, slyly contemptuous air of an old mandarin. 'We can't share power that we don't have. We could some day share city or state power, but not community power.' At a youth rally after the Deadwyler killing, Karenga said, 'We are free men. We have our own language. We are making our own customs and we name ourselves. Only slaves and dogs are named by their masters' (Karenga's name used to be Everett).

The Deadwyler case, Karenga thinks, 'could be the catalyst that sets off a community-wide revolt.'

White Los Angeles is convinced that the Negroes want another violent revolt, and black Watts is sure the whites will provoke it. Observers who have wandered around the 77th Precinct say the mood of the police swings from deep hatred to deep fear of the Negroes. The Negroes feel much the same way, in reverse.

On both sides there are increasing pressures to keep the lid on. For the whites, another blow-up could upset an already delicate political situation — there are state, congressional and county elections this year, and Watts is a major issue in all of them. Governor Brown, for one, has an overriding interest in at least the semblance of tranquillity in Watts. He has suffered criticism on the subject from all sides; the whites think he was too weak with the Negroes, and the Negroes think that in deference to white prejudice and frugality he has failed to seek bold reforms. He is sensitive to the charge that his office did not quickly call up the National Guard last August (Brown was initially out of the country, and much of the blame rests with Lt Gov. Glenn Anderson). He is said to be a little quicker on the trigger these days. In the wake of the Deadwyler killing, National Guardsmen were alerted and advance men were moved into the area in the middle of the night. Brown sends aides into Watts to 'talk things over' with Negro militants, and while nothing tangible comes of the conversations, the Negroes are pulled into a talking situation.

On the ghetto Negroes' side, there are new organizational pressures for 'cooling it' that did not exist before last August. Watts was the paradigm non-community. It had a wide variety of leaders and practically no followers. In the past year, the traditional leadership has been dis-

carded – first went the clergymen, then the politicians, and the older civil-rights chiefs who used to talk mainly to the whites. There are rudiments of new kinds of organization, but it is barely visible (especially to the white eye). 'Before August there were gangs,' Tommy Jacquette explained; 'now they're organizations.' There are also the new self-help agencies, like Operation Bootstrap ('Learn Baby, Learn') which does job training, literacy, and personal behaviour education in a strongly nationalist atmosphere. The local poverty programme has funded the Westminster Neighborhood Association and the Neighborhood Adult Participation Project which sponsors training and education projects, block and tenant organizations and various social services. Local residents are hired (including some of the most active young militants) and they quickly develop an interest in community stability. The activist groups perhaps would not mind a good fight – if they could lead it. But none of them feels that they are yet in a secure leadership position. For the time being, they all would rather keep things just below boiling-point.

There is nothing very important being done to change people's lives in Watts, and until there is, outbursts of fresh violence should be expected. The official war on poverty has some \$33 million to spend (after long delays in funding because of Mayor Samuel Yorty's political shenanigans with the board of directors), but few Watts Negroes can see where it all goes. Actually, two-thirds of it shores up the public schools, a programme which is, in the phrase of a poverty programme official in Washington, 'like flushing it down the drain.' The Teen Posts, Westminster and N A P P have some potentially helpful programmes, but they are so far mired in the general administrative mess and rendered practically useless by the

inadequacy of funds. Sargent Shriver has been shopping for a new L.A. poverty czar, but at least two of those asked have said privately that Shriver would not assure them of his political support for whatever 'controversial' activities they might try.

Times are bad in the power broker business; many of the middlemen seem to be losing their accounts. In Watts, the whites – and even the middle-class Negroes – cannot do much to win the confidence of the ghetto. There is suspicion all around. One Watts nationalist leader told me, when I called for an interview, 'I don't think you'd give us a fair shake because like most liberals you're probably a Jew and very sensitive to anti-Semitism, and you just don't want to understand black nationalism.' The impression is strong that, in every way, it is already too late in Watts.

Although whites will be increasingly irrelevant in the ghetto, it does not mean the death of 'leadership'. Ignored for years, natural leaders are now quickly rising to the top. On the first day of the Deadwyler inquest hundreds of furious Watts residents jammed into the courtroom and threatened, if only by their presence, to break up the proceedings. Appeals from stern and respectable whites failed. Finally, a black man in a Malcolm X shirt climbed into the judge's chair and directed the scores of Negro clergymen to get out. They did. Then, he said, the rest of the black folk (without special business in the court) could go, too. The people filed peacefully into the corridor, and the man in the Malcolm X shirt climbed down.

Battle of Newark

New Statesman 21.7.67

At high noon Tuesday, in Plainfield, New Jersey, the bells of a church began to chime *Onward, Christian Soldiers*. Down the street, an armoured vehicle crunched over layers of broken glass and stopped in the driveway of a cluster of small, neat cottages. The army militiamen on board clicked open the safety-catches of their weapons, then jumped to the ground. 'Get your ass on the double,' a sergeant shouted. The troops charged into the houses. State and local policemen, armed and helmeted like the soldiers, took up positions in the streets and gardens, behind car doors and trees. The militiamen battered down doors and scrambled through rooms full of black people, looking for 'snipers'. But they found none, and in half an hour the whole crew moved on to play the war game elsewhere.

It is a brutal war and an absurd game that has afflicted northern New Jersey in this summer season. In downtown Plainfield (a city about 35 miles from New York), whites went busily about their affairs in the shops and banks, only a few hundred yards from the war-zone. Along its perimeters, past the chiming bells, a teeny-bopper couple in an open red MG glided from checkpoint to checkpoint, surveying the scene. They could smell the danger but felt safe from it, like runners far ahead of the bulls in the streets of Pamplona. Inside the 'riot area', in occupied Plainfield, Negroes stood in small crowds. Whites who ventured past them in cars were taunted with angry obscenities. The few stores – it is primarily a residential

section – were stripped and burned. Cars and motorcycles lay smashed and overturned in the streets, and glass covered everything, sparkling on the streets and sidewalks like precious stones of every colour. By Tuesday a policeman was stamped and beaten to death by the people in the streets.

Plainfield seems only a skirmish in the shadow of Newark. There, for five days and nights, the city's 250,000 Negroes (the majority of the population) were in total 'insurrection', as Governor Richard Hughes admitted. It began as a protest against the beating, by police, of a Negro taxi-driver who had been arrested for 'tailgating' – following too closely – an unmarked plainclothesman's car. That first night there was looting of liquor stores, and a group of Negro youths threw a fire-bomb at the wall of a police precinct station. But the city officials, who have been fearing a riot for three years, played it cool. They did not gas the crowd or fire upon it. By dawn, the ghastly ghetto which is Newark's Central Ward was quiet and the mayor announced that it was all a 'minor incident' with no racial implications.

The next night was different. Thousands of Negroes poured into the streets, looting and burning white-owned stores. The primary targets were those which were known for overcharging ghetto-dwellers. White government officials found the scene unimaginably mad, but there was more rationality than they would admit. For the most part the Negroes concentrated their attacks on shops carrying highly-prized merchandise – liquor, clothing, drugs, car parts. Even more rationally, they left alone those few businesses in the area owned by Negroes. Not one which had posted the shibboleth 'Soul Brother' on the windows and doors was touched.

When the big night of looting was over, the insurrec-

tion – or rebellion, as other officials were now calling it – had little to feed on. Half the shops in the Newark ghetto had been attacked. But Governor Hughes – a ‘liberal’ Democrat with respectable credentials in the run of civil rights legislation – either did not believe it was finished, or did not want to. He activated the National Guard and moved into Newark himself to take control of the city. The local administration, which had been playing a role in the middle between white anxiety and black anger, retired helplessly before the military power of the state.

From then on there was a war of revenge in Newark, with the army and police on the offensive. So far, only three people (all Negroes) had been killed. But the troops came in with guns blazing. Governor Hughes toured the ghetto and decided, in (perhaps) unconscious parody of a white colonial governor in Africa, that ‘the line between the jungle and the law might as well be drawn here as any place in America’. The troops were told: ‘Use your shot-guns and revolvers – that’s what you have them for.’ They followed orders meticulously. In the course of looking for ‘snipers’, the police and guardsmen killed 23 Negroes. Not one sniper was arrested, not one killed. Many of the dead were women and kids.

There were probably a few (professional) snipers in the battle but they were certainly insignificant. Others fired back in self-defence or in counter-attack if their homes and families were attacked by the troops. But the police rampaged through the ghetto, spraying public housing blocks with bullets up the walls for six floors. Houses and apartments were ransacked and bystanders beaten. Some of the Negroes fought back, but not many – not nearly enough, people thought later. In any case, if there were snipers, they were impossibly poor shots – only one policeman and one fireman were killed, the latter prob-

ably by a police bullet. When it was all over, a Negro who had been fighting and trying to organize the community told me sadly: 'What can you say to a kid who asks why they got 23 of us and we got only two of them?'

Early this week it began to occur to Hughes and his staff (which includes a former director of the Ford Foundation) that the occupation of the black city of Newark was producing something close to a guerrilla war. Some of the militants who met with him suggested that its logical consequence would be mutual massacre or concentration camps, or an entire state in 'insurrection'. He hardly knew how to respond, but after a day of lip-flopping on strategy, he suddenly pulled out the army on Monday afternoon. Crowds on the sidewalks cheered as the troops marched off, as if it were Liberation Day.

The battle of Newark was less than a revolution but more than just a cry of frustration. If its politics were primitive and ambiguous, it was still a mass uprising in which tens of thousands – perhaps half the black people of the city – participated in some way. Governor Hughes was appalled at the holiday air he felt in the ghetto, but to anyone who understands what it means to be black in the white American century, that was a liberating spirit.

The Revolt Against America

New Statesman 28.7.67

By its own designation, this is a nation of problem-solvers, of practical politicians and action-intellectuals. But in this fourth year of black insurrection and seventh of stale-mated war there is no sign that America has either the will or the imagination to solve its most rending social problem of the century. In Vietnam, US policy may be disastrous, but at least there is a policy: 'pacification', elections, bombing. In the dozen cities and towns where something close to civil war is raging this week, there is hardly any coherent response from government. State and local authorities send in police and guardsmen and hope that some chemistry will work to end the violence. The President has no ideas at all, save the occasional dispatch of Federal troops (to Detroit), or half-hearted appeals, on midnight T V, to restore law and order.

Congress can think only of calling an investigation, in the vain hope that some nationwide network of conspiracy can be found to have started the chain of uprisings. Long ago members gave up on social welfare and community action programmes which were thought to be possible antidotes to rioting. This year Congress has cut funds or otherwise dismembered legislation for education, housing, urban redevelopment and – last week – rat eradication. Congressmen laughed that idea off the floor.

But although Congress may be appallingly inhumane in this session, perhaps its assumptions are right. The liberal solutions for the problems of the ghetto – more

money, more jobs, more swimming pools – have largely failed. That Detroit should erupt with such ferocity is a good lesson, although a distressing one, for many well-intentioned officials. Jerome Cavanagh is billed as the country's most 'progressive' mayor, the model of a new breed. He gets as much anti-poverty action as he can lay his hands on, he keeps the police as polite as possible and he has made repeated overtures to the city's large (thirty-three per cent) Negro population. Somehow, it was all beside the point.

Across the country, conditions for Negroes are no better now (and some say worse) than when President Kennedy started the trickle of dollars and the gush of rhetoric flowing into the urban core. Perhaps the difficulty has been in the gap between the money and the promises: it is widening all the time. But it is more likely that the violence arises not from demands for more material goods and improved services, but as a rebellion against the kind of life Negroes have in American society.

Middle-class whites have been struck by the easy disregard Negroes in the riot areas have for 'private property'. The whites cannot conceive of themselves looting or breaking windows or tearing down shops. Those who try to be most sympathetic may rationalize the rampage by pointing out that the looters are poor and deprived, and that a rapaciously materialistic culture tempts them with goods they cannot afford. But the experience of the major riots suggests another theory. Negroes in big cars, from the posher parts of the community, loot and 'brick' along with their poorest comrades from the slummiest sections. In Newark one young Negro, who happened to find himself in a supermarket in the early morning hours, came across an acquaintance from the 'black bourgeoisie' loading up a shopping cart with all kinds of staples

and delicacies. The older man seemed embarrassed for just a moment, then explained that he was helping himself because he feared all the markets would soon be closed and his family would have nothing to eat. The two men smiled understandingly and both went back to their looting.

At bottom, the looting and sacking of white businesses in the ghettos is an authentic kind of rebellion. Indeed, it may be the most characteristic form of revolt in the most advanced materialistic societies. What better way is there to attack the values of a culture than by caricaturing them? If there is any humour in these macabre events, it consists of parody: the riots are a kind of street-theatre on a continental stage, a super-Brechtian morality play holding a mirror up to a violent and materialistic nation that likes to see itself as peace-loving and idealistic. That does not make it any easier for government to deal with the problems. For there are no ways, in the politics of the country at this moment, to do anything worthwhile for 25 million Negroes. Even if massive expenditures of money could help, the demands of the war make such efforts unimaginable. And if the war ended, the money would be spent, for the most part, on goodies for the middle class, as it always is. There would be bigger highway programmes, cushier airports, lovelier national parks, more culture centres and rapid transit in the suburbs, richer universities and perhaps an income-tax cut. To change the basis of distribution of national wealth requires radical rearrangements of politics. Nothing like that seems to be happening, at least for the moment. Rather, a kind of paralysis is setting in. The Republicans have seized upon the riots as a way to discredit the Administration, and, of course, for the wrong reasons. Senator Dirksen was at his most unappealing when he

charged that conspirators were responsible for the violence, that secret factories were assembling Molotov cocktails, and that the President refused to crack down. But the Democrats were no more convincing in blaming it on the Republicans' lack of interest in rat-eradication.

Domestic Kremlinologists are busy figuring out how this summer's string of revolts will affect the elections next year. So far the only thing clear is that anyone in office at the time of the riots, from the President down to the various mayors of insurrectionary cities, will suffer. They are all in a double-bind, between the demands of Negroes and white liberals to 'cool it' and the demands of the rest of the whites for quick suppression. If the politicians are 'liberal' themselves – and most who are elected in heavily black constituencies are – they will find no space to manoeuvre between those forces. The result could be the collapse of the liberal Democratic political coalition in the country next year, and the widest swing within the two-party system since liberalism was 'established' in 1932. The odds are not published here, but it would be safe to bet that Ronald Reagan's chances for the presidency have risen higher with each new outbreak.

It seems strangely irrelevant, however, to talk blandly about political shifts, however startling, within the routine of conventional politics. For there is a feeling that the conventions of politics have been disrupted. This week, for the first time, the uprisings began to take on rudimentary political aspects. In Newark people talked of abandoning their traditional loyalties to the Democratic machine and supporting independent black candidates for office. In Cambridge, Maryland, Rap Brown (the chairman of S N C C) gave a tough revolutionary speech to a crowd of 400 Negroes, then led a march through

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town and was stopped by police fire at the edge of the ghetto. He was wounded slightly. But the next morning, a wide area of the Negro section had been burnt to the ground. Mr Brown has since been arrested by Federal agents.

Anatomy of Race War

New Statesman 8.3.68

The total of President Johnson's response to the black rebellion last summer was the proclamation of a national day of prayer and the empanelment of an investigatory commission. As a political programme, it seemed to count rather heavily on the intervention of the Almighty and the good intentions of the ruling class; but, after all, the President may be on better terms with both those Establishments than he is with Congress. Six months later, we have yet to find much evidence of divine grace, but now the lords temporal have handed down their report, and it is comforting to see that they recognize the essential dilemma.

'Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white – separate and unequal,' the commission's summary begins, in a mood of alarm quite unusual in government documents of that kind. 'Race prejudice has shaped our history decisively; it now threatens to affect our future,' the commissioners continue. 'What white Americans have never fully understood ... is that white society is deeply implicated in the ghetto. White institutions created it, white institutions maintain it and white society condones it.'

There follows the familiar recitation of the effects of racism on black Americans: poverty, discrimination, segregation, hopelessness, powerlessness. The 'riots' (the commission's word throughout) that erupted in a hundred or more cities last year were symptomatic of the black man's condition in white America; they were part

of no conspiracy, nor indeed were they perceptibly provoked by Negro militants. (One unpublished commission paper has been leaked to the press; it blames the police of Cambridge, Maryland, for the 'incident' which Rap Brown is under indictment for inciting.) The typical rioter, the commission found, was not unemployed but underemployed, and had a somewhat better education than the average ghetto non-rioter. Finally, the report (250,000 words in the long version, with many volumes of confidential papers stashed away for the present in the National Archives) finds that all the current anti-poverty programmes and civil rights laws hardly touch the ghetto Negroes, or make much of a difference in his situation. The gap between black and white is growing.

Almost as an afterthought, the commission recommends a disjointed collection of legislative measures and voluntary projects – from federal income maintenance to police-community relations services – which might conceivably save the republic from disaster. The proposals entail the expenditure of hundreds of billions as well as the rearrangement of all the important institutional patterns in the society: in other words, the liquidation of white privilege. There may be historical precedents for such class magnanimity, but the report does not cite them.

In fact, things seem to be going the other way. On the day the summary report was issued, President Johnson delivered a major speech on 'crime on the streets' – the code phrase for Negro uppityness, as opposed to white racism. He then left town for another weekend tour of military bases without saying a word about the commission. The first official White House notice came from Vice-President Humphrey, who questioned all the jive about 'two societies'. Humphrey said that the Administration was doing a great deal for the Negro. Still publicly

silent, the President is reported to be furious that the commission did not compliment his efforts in this election year.

On the day after the summary was released, the Senate voted to continue its filibuster of the current Civil Rights Bill, which proposes to outlaw discrimination in some housing. A few days later there was a change of heart, and closure was imposed on the debate. It appears, however, that the 'liberals' won the right to vote on the bill in exchange for a series of crippling compromises. The first blow was the acceptance of an amendment setting exorbitant federal penalties for 'inciting to riot'. Known familiarly as the 'Rap Brown amendment', the measure almost passed last year. In any case, the House has so far rejected 'open housing' in any form, and the outlook for its final congressional passage is dim.

The crucial problems do not involve anti-discrimination legislation – which tends to affect middle-class Negroes only, and in any case is not enforced; there has been no significant school-integration in the South in the 14 years since segregation was declared unconstitutional. Rather, the basic issue is money. Open-housing laws cost nothing; home-building programmes are expensive, and so is job creation, job training, education improvement, welfare expansion and a guaranteed annual income. Taxes are already high, and Congress will not even pass President Johnson's ten per cent tax surcharge to finance the war in Vietnam. Rep. George Mahon, the Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee (and a Texan), estimates that enactment of the more important recommendations made in the commission report would require, at the beginning, a 100 per cent surcharge. No Congress could pass that and leave Washington alive.

What is wrong with the report is its unconcern with

politics. Its rhetoric of doom is compelling, even if definitions are blurred (what is 'racism'? – merely prejudice?) and an analysis of the institutions of racism practically nonexistent. At least it conveys an agony appropriate to the season. But its proposals cannot be effective in a vacuum. They have to have a political context, and the commission gives no indication of how the new politics of reform can be made. As a start, the commission could have pointed out that while \$30-40,000m. is being spent this year on Vietnam – not to mention the \$70,000m. more in the total defence budget – no attack on the race/poverty problem is remotely possible. But the report makes only a fleeting reference to the war, and refuses to give domestic needs a higher priority than imperial ones.

No doubt that will please President Johnson, who needs every penny he can get for Vietnam. As for the ghettos, he must make do this summer with repressive rather than ameliorative programmes. Even the cynical make-work projects which the Administration has tried in previous years ('Operation Long Hot Summer') have no funds now, and besides, they did not seem to do much good. Instead, the police are arming themselves with the latest lethal and 'non-lethal' riot control weapons, and army and National Guard units are training in mock 'Riotville' locations on various bases. (Some soldiers dress up as Negroes and anti-war demonstrators, and others as soldiers; at a signal, the war game begins.) In cities such as Detroit, whites are arming themselves with pistols and shotguns and organizing neighbourhood vigilante groups.

Editorial writers express the hope that the commission report will 'shock' white America into acting, even if it provides no blueprint for action. But it is doubtful that there is much left to shock. After all, we have been hear-

ing about the effects of racism for years now. Little Rock was ten and a half years ago. President Kennedy said it all very well in his TV address to the nation during the Birmingham battle in 1963. President Johnson's special message to Congress at the time of the Selma march three years ago this month was as shocking as anyone could want. 'We shall overcome,' he pledged that night. Then, he sent troops to guard Negroes as they marched. This summer, he may send the troops to mow them down in the streets.

The American Nightmare

New Statesman 12.4.68

What happened last week-end was an American convulsion, not a revolution. With all nerves naked and the system pulsing with new energy, the murder of Martin Luther King provoked a violent national twitch, a soul-writhing, practically involuntary reaction. We have grown accustomed to the face of urban violence in the last half-decade: Harlem in 1964, then Watts, next Chicago, and then Newark, Detroit and a hundred cities last year. But this was somehow different. The earlier riots began with local incidents, and over the course of weeks or months produced a national pattern; this April's uprisings in eighty cities were responses to a single national stimulus. That very immediacy gave an authentic aspect to the long, black rebellion, and for those who had not yet understood, Friday was a night loaded with omens.

It is no longer possible to see the sacking of cities as merely the work of 'criminal elements', although whites wish desperately that it were so. President Johnson calls it, simply, 'lawlessness', but he must have an idea of its nature, because in the next breath he calls for 'needed reforms'. If he could spend a day in the ghetto, like Peter the Great among the shipwrights, he would see that law or the absence of it has little relevance for the mass of Negro poor. To much of Black America, the law is what white men use to rationalize their oppression of blacks. If there was ever a social contract joined freely by the two races in this country, it has been abrogated.

In his brief decade of work, Dr King tried vainly to make whites enforce that contract, which was never real in the first place. He had to assume that the races could, with a minimum of conflict, find ways of living together peacefully and on the basis of equality. Dr King's methods were noble – saintly, even – but his assumptions seem to have been wrong. A society so suffused with racism does not reform itself by moral example, and the 'white power structure' (a phrase he used) does not fall before a sit-in, a march or a freedom ride.

Dr King's immense importance, however, derived from both his success and failure. To Negroes, he was a spiritual saviour; to whites, he was a political leader. The attention he brought to the Negro freedom movement and the legislative gains he won for civil rights secure his place in American legend. That he failed finally to change the system which brutalizes his race is a profound relief to the white majority. As a reward, they have now elevated his minor successes into major triumphs and have given his failures a significance which they do not really deserve.

His death has become an occasion for an extraordinary 'pacification programme' conducted on TV and in the press. Any previous controversiality which might have attached to Dr King has been removed almost by national consensus, and last week's bigots are today proclaiming his nobility. But no one has had a change of heart; Dr King represented the white man's last hope for racial stability and minimal change, and his death brings as much fear as sorrow to whites.

It carries a threat to blacks, too, but for a different reason. White men have murdered blacks for hundreds of years in America, and indeed the pace has quickened in the recent past. The three most revered figures in the

black movement – Medgar Evers, Malcolm X and Dr King – have been assassinated within five years; two appear to have been killed outright by whites, and the third was slain in an internecine quarrel against the backdrop of racist pressures. But there have been dozens of other leaders killed in the course of their struggle, and every week in every ghetto of the country blacks die, in jails or on the street, simply for their blackness. Then there are the ‘little murders’ – the countless indignities and humiliations and deprivations which round out the lives of black people. In a sense, white America has committed a kind of genocide. The death of Dr King, the white man’s hope as well as the black’s, could mean that murders will get bigger.

The wave of ‘riots’ (a loaded noun, like all the others that describe these ambiguous events) spring not so much from the ghetto’s anger at the assassination as from the sudden confirmation of the hopelessness of non-violent protest. The guerrilla-looters and fire-bombers did not rise to avenge the death of Dr King, but to attack the system which makes them, as well as him, all victims.

The long hot summer came a little early this year, and it scorched cities that have been spared in the past, as well as some of the familiar targets. Those who said that Washington would never blow, despite the obvious tensions and the dreadful conditions for the huge black population (sixty-five per cent), see now that no ghetto is immune. Long avenues in the centres of the Negro districts are completely gutted – with the exception of a ‘soul brother’ barbershop or Negro-owned shop here and there. The 5,000 who were arrested were unusually well-educated and well-employed, many in government jobs. The curfew takes up half the day. Some 11,600 army

troops patrol the streets, and thousands more are encamped on the outskirts of town. There is an army machine-gun nest on the steps of the Capitol. Ruins are still smouldering, and there is sporadic tear-gassing. The Cherry Blossom Festival has been cancelled.

Around the country, dozens of people have been killed (mostly blacks, said to be 'fleeing' from looted stores). Ten Army detachments have been moved into three major cities so far, National Guard units patrol many more, and state and local police are trying to deal with the rest. There is more to come. News programmes are interrupted for 'special bulletins' as the next city explodes; Sunday it was Pittsburg, Monday night Cincinnati. No doubt 'order' will be restored – an order based not on removal of the conditions which gave rise to the uprisings, but on armed repression and the thin promise of future reforms. Order on terror, too: in Oakland, the police cornered the entire leadership of the 'Black Panther Party' in a slum house, and opened fire. Bobby Hutton, one of the young leaders, was killed when he emerged with his hands high in the air. All the others were wounded and jailed.

Who killed Martin Luther King? There is no easy answer, and if the man who pulled the trigger is caught the question will still remain. For the culprit is not one psychotic individual but a complex of men and institutions, all very sane in their own terms. That which killed King killed Bobby Hutton and Malcolm X; it runs the slum housing supermarkets and the 'easy credit' shops in the ghettos; it sends black soldiers to Vietnam and Guatemala. And white ones too. In effect, it forces black leaders to kill themselves: King's non-violent protest raises hopes that had to be frustrated, and the result was predictable violence. It is a brutal, blind and violent society hung up

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on the myth of its humanity, dedicated to equality and founded on racism, proclaiming democracy and practising exploitation. It corrupted King and country, and in a tragic sense has driven them both to an ambiguous suicide.

Soul Power*

New York Review of Books 24.8.67

The Movement is dead; the Revolution is unborn. The streets are bloody and ablaze, but it is difficult to see why, and impossible to know for what end. Government on every level is ineffectual, helpless to act either in the short term or the long. The force of Army and police seems not to suppress violence, but incite it. Mediators have no space to work; they command neither resources nor respect, and their rhetoric is discredited in all councils, by all classes. The old words are meaningless, the old explanations irrelevant, the old remedies useless. It is the worst of times.

It is the best of times. The wretched of this American earth are together as they have never been before, in motion if not in movement. No march, no sit-in, no boycott ever touched so many. The social cloth which binds and suffocates them is tearing at its seamiest places. The subtle methods of co-optation work no better to keep it intact than the brutal methods of repression; if it is any comfort, liberalism proves hardly more effective than fascism. Above all, there is a sense that the continuity of an age has been cut, that we have arrived at an infrequent fulcrum of history, and that what comes now will be vastly different from what went before.

It is not a time for reflection, but for evocation. The responsibility of the intellectual is the same as that of the

* *Where Do We Go From Here: Chaos or Community?* by Martin Luther King Jr., Harper & Row, 209 pp., \$4.95. Published in UK by Hodder and Stoughton 1968, Penguin Books 1969.

street organizer, the draft resister, the Digger: to talk to people, not *about* them. The important literature now is the underground press, the speeches of Malcolm, the works of Fanon, the songs of the Rolling Stones and Aretha Franklin. The rest all sounds like the Moynihan Report and *Time*-Essay, explaining everything, understanding nothing, changing no one.

Martin Luther King once had the ability to talk to people, the power to change them by evoking images of revolution. But the duty of a revolutionary is to make revolutions (say those who have done it), and King made none. By his own admission, things are worse in the US today – for white people and black – than when he began the bus boycott in Montgomery eleven years ago. Last summer, in Chicago, he was booed at a mass meeting, and later, as he lay in bed unsleeping, he understood why:

For twelve years I, and others like me, had held out radiant promises of progress. I had preached to them about my dream. I had lectured to them about the not too distant day when they would have freedom, 'all, here and now'. I had urged them to have faith in America and in white society. Their hopes had soared. They were now booing because they felt we were unable to deliver on our promises. They were booing because we had urged them to have faith in people who had too often proved to be unfaithful. They were now hostile because they were watching the dream that they had so readily accepted turn into a nightmare.

The fault is no more King's than it is ours, though no less, either. He has been outstripped by his times, overtaken by the events which he may have obliquely helped to produce but could not predict. He is not likely to regain command. Both his philosophy and his techniques

of leadership were products of a different world, of relationships which no longer obtain and expectations which are no longer valid. King assumed that the political economy of America was able to allow the integration of the mass of poor Negroes into the mainstream society, with only minor pushing and shoving. White liberals would be the thin edge of the wedge, the Democratic Party the effective agency of change, a marching army of blacks the sting to conscience. The trick lay in finding the best tactics, presenting the most feasible programmes, and putting on the most idealistic faces.

It worked well for a while. Southern feudalism began to disintegrate (it was already unsupportable), voters were registered and lunch counters integrated, and civil-rights acts were passed. But there were stonier walls behind the first defences of segregation. A society infused with racism would not easily discard the arrangements by which it confers status. Unlike anachronistic feudalism in the deep South, the national system of industrial and technological capitalism was practically invulnerable. Marches and freedom songs were unavailing. The 'power structures' of the Mississippi Delta may have trembled when they heard 'Ain't Gonna Let Nobody Turn Me 'Round', but the one in Cook County was unmoved. It had better weapons: an anti-poverty programme, an Uncle Tom congressman, available jobs, and huge stores of tolerance. When that failed, as it did, there were armies of police and soldiers prepared for final solutions.

King may have first realized his predicament as he sat, silently, in the caucus of Mississippi Freedom Democrats in Atlantic City three years ago this month. The National Democratic Party in which he had placed his faith for change denied their petition for representation; it had no intention of altering the balance of power between

blacks and whites in Mississippi. Worst of all, the liberal vanguard of that Party, Hubert Humphrey and Walter Reuther, were wielding the heaviest hatchets, to protect their own skins and secure their own interests.

If that lesson was unclear, King could have seen a half year later how the party of peace embarked on the most barbaric imperialistic war of this century. At best, he might have understood that the institutional demands that induced the war – the politics and economics of anti-communism – were parallel to the ones that kept the underclass in its place – the politics and economics of racism. At least, he began to realize that social destruction in Vietnam was somehow incompatible with social advancement at home.

When the going was good, King still had his white liberals and his black marchers. But then the going was bad and getting worse. The white liberals had apparently misunderstood, or had been misinformed. They were willing supporters when the goals of the Movement were integration and the *embourgeoisement* of poor Negroes. When the goal was liberation, the slogan 'power' instead of 'freedom', and the consequences were convulsions in the society they wanted desperately to preserve, the liberals dropped back, with their marching feet and then their cheques. At the same time, and for the same reasons, King's black base began to thin. With no agents for change responsive to his demands, there would be no goods to deliver. It was not that King had chosen the wrong tactics, or picked the wrong allies. He had simply, and disastrously, arrived at the wrong conclusions about the world. No coalitions available and no programmes imaginable could 'succeed' even in his own terms. Insofar as his objectives were revolutionary, they could not come

out of status-quo institutions; insofar as they were not, his followers were not interested.

King's response was to fly out in all directions in search of a new constituency. He arrived in Chicago last summer with fanfares in the national press, and commensurate ballyhoo in the streets. The thrust of his attack was the formation of community organizations to 'End the Slums'. His strategy had three phases: tenants' councils would harass landlords, mass (integrated) marches would arouse the country, and the Democratic Administration in Washington would push an open-housing bill through Congress.

Within a few months, he had failed in all three endeavours. The local councils were haphazardly organized by staff workers with no understanding of the problems of building a solid base of local people. The marches were premature – the community was not ready to support them to the end – and King had to surrender to Mayor Daley and his friends for a worthless list of promises that would never be fulfilled. The national Democratic Party was unable to pass a housing bill, although it was theoretically in charge of the most 'liberal' congress in thirty years.

King retired in defeat to write his book, surfacing only a few months ago to condemn the war in which his movement had been drowned. As always, his speeches were fluent and moving, but as always, again, they never quite got to the heart of the problem. For like his formulation of the race conflict, his conception of the war is devoid of historical perspective and a sense of the processes of society. He seems to believe that progress is inevitable because compelled by an abstract moral force. Reality is seen as a series of episodes: 'every revolutionary movement has its peaks of united activity and its valleys of

debate and internal confusion.' Life is just one damn thing after another.

It is not easy to reconcile King's morality and his history – or the lack of it. Conventional commentators these days like to speak of King's 'nobility' and the purity of his humanism, and then they sigh that the world is not ready for him. But it is more accurate to say that King is not ready for the world. His morality derives from where *he* is, not from where his followers are. The black people of America are at the losing ends of shotguns, outweighed by thumb-heavy scales, on the outermost margins of power. King's invocation of love and integration and non-violence may embody what he likes to call the 'Judaean-Christian tradition', but in the US in this generation those are basically the demands of the boss, the preacher, the publisher, and the politician. Turn-the-other-cheek was always a personal standard, not a general rule; people can commit suicide but peoples cannot. Morality, like politics, starts at the barrel of a gun.

In spite of King's famous sincerity and the super-honesty which he exudes, there is something disingenuous about his public voice, and about this book. He is not really telling it like it is, but as he thinks his audience wants it to be. His readers will be white, and his book sounds as if it were intended to be read aloud in suburban synagogues and A D A chapter meetings. He recounts the heroic deeds of American Negroes, such as the Guianan immigrant, Jan Matzeliger, who invented a shoe-lasting machine that developed into 'the multi-million-dollar United Shoe Machinery Company', and Norman Rillieux, 'whose invention of an evaporating pan revolutionized the process of sugar refining'. Then he tells personal tales of discrimination against his family. The tone

is that of a middle-class Negro having the same old conversation about race with his white liberal friend.

At the end, King suggests a few 'programmes' for action, and they amount mostly to legislative demands that either will not be passed, or, if they were, would result in none of the 'structural changes in society' to which he occasionally refers. He likes the idea of a guaranteed annual income, more Negro elected officials, better schools, more jobs, and protection of rights. Those are unexceptionable goals, but King has no real notion of how they are to be attained, or to what they may lead. Although he speaks of structural changes, he assumes structural preservation.

What is hardest now to comprehend – remembering the *Time* covers and the Nobel award – is King's irrelevancy. Almost seven years ago, in *Harper's*, James Baldwin wrote that King had 'succeeded, in a way no Negro before him has managed to do, to carry the battle into the individual heart and make its resolution the province of the individual will. . . . He has incurred, therefore, the grave responsibility of continuing to lead in the path he has encouraged so many people to follow. How he will do this I do not know, but I do not see how he can possibly avoid a break, at last, with the habits and attitudes, stratagems and fears of the past.'

Baldwin's scepticism was wise. The break has not come, and the heart is no longer the battleground. Nearly Jeremiah in 1960, King now seems a black Joshua Loth Liebman:

Our most fruitful course is to stand firm, move forward non-violently, accept disappointments and cling to hope. Our determined refusal not to be stopped will eventually open the door to fulfillment. By recognizing the necessity of suffering in a righteous cause, we may achieve our humanity's full stature.

To guard ourselves from bitterness, we need the vision to see in this generation's ordeals the opportunity to transfigure both ourselves and American society.

This summer, King is shuffling between Chicago and Cleveland. He has all but abandoned the 'End the Slums' campaign in Chicago, and instead is pushing 'Operation Breadbasket', a programme of economic pressure against large food-marketing corporations in an effort to get more jobs for Negroes. A similar tactic had some limited success in Philadelphia many years ago, but its gains have not been significant anywhere else. From a Chicago base, King hopes to get ministers across the country who are affiliated with his Southern Christian Leadership Conference to start local 'Breadbaskets' – against National Dairy Products, Kellogg, and California Packing Company goods. The theory is that the ministers will negotiate for jobs with company representatives; if no progress is made, congregations will be mobilized to picket, and, if necessary, boycott proscribed products. At the same time, King's staff in Chicago has a federal HEW grant to do vocational education, so that some untrained Negroes off the streets may be able to fill the new jobs if they appear.

There is no reason to believe that the national 'Breadbasket' will make more headway than the local ones. The organization is crude, and, more than that, many of the assumptions are questionable. The few jobs that may open will not noticeably change the character of ghettos; at best, a few more black people will pop out into the middle class, like overheated molecules in a brimming beaker of water. Many of the jobs would go to Negroes who are either skilled already (and may leave slightly less desirable employment) or at the very top of the underclass – those few who are ready to jump. Local groups backing up the demands for jobs will be thoroughly controlled by

SCLC staff workers, in consultation with the odd black businessman in town. There is little implication for permanent organization or real movement. 'Breadbasket' amounts to an escalation of rhetoric, but a diminution of power over a broad base. More than anything King has attempted so far, it assumes the permanence, and even the desirability, of present economic relationships. The only change would be the imposition of a few black faces behind desks and counters.

In Cleveland, King's staff is working on a larger scale, but his campaign there is new, and it is likely to suffer from the same deficiencies found in the Chicago experience: top-heavy organization, premature action, orientation toward small goals (instead of movements). If there is violence there, King's position will be all the more precarious. He has manoeuvred for several years now between white anxieties and black anger. On one side, he tells whites that he alone can control the ghettos, if they support his work and give him goods to deliver; on the other, he tells the black people presumably under his influence that rioting will get them nowhere, and that he alone can give them what they want. It is a complicated game requiring consummate political skill and, although King abides by the rules, he has not been winning many points. Whites have ceased to believe him, or really to care: the blacks hardly listen.

It is not that the ghetto listens to anyone else. No black 'leaders' with national reputations speak in understandable accents. The only authentic black hero of this revolutionary generation was Malcolm; Stokely Carmichael comes closer to that standard than most, but he is somehow unscarred, not deeply cynical enough to evoke the radical funkiness of black America. Carmichael, like the

rest of the brilliant S N C C organizers of his early Sixties era, is still hung-up on white culture. What happens when a child of Camus grows up? There is something stagey about his public performances; each is too much a *tour de force*. 'Stokely Carmichael, the tee vee star-michael', his S N C C friends called him in Mississippi in 1964. Until now, at least, he has had too good a time. His successor, Rap Brown, lacks Carmichael's smile and brittle brilliance, but he seems more at ease with the slowly moving black poor. He may well sound too dangerous to be tolerated. 'We going to burn this town to the ground,' he says. Apocalypse is the normal mood of ghetto talk, but on the outside it sounds like criminal anarchy. Brown must choose between understanding from his audience or tolerance from the enemy.

S N C C decided last winter to move into Northern urban centres and begin the kind of organizing there that it had once done in Southern black belt counties. The stated political objectives of the Southern campaign – politicians elected, schools desegregated, economic improvement – have not been fulfilled. But S N C C had been able to devise radical new models for the organization of communities. The projects in Mississippi and Alabama had suddenly given people a sense of themselves and their power.

It worked so well for the wrong reasons as well as the right ones. S N C C's black and white intellectuals charmed the rural 'folks' as much as they organized them. When the S N C C kids left, the local communities often slid back – if not into the lives that they had led, then to a less sophisticated kind of political organization than S N C C had envisioned. A rough kind of black tammanyism began to arise in the counties where S N C C and the Freedom Democrats had worked hardest. S N C C became

largely irrelevant, and its staff members more or less uninterested in hanging around to see the after-effects.

The Northern campaign never really happened. A few workers in a small number of cities are still at it, but their total effort is small, and its effect diffuse. A Harlem S N C C staffer works with a school parents' committee; a Newark team tries to turn people on to radical ways of dealing with whatever problems most concern them. Since the spring, S N C C has been most actively involved in energizing Negro college campuses, for, after all, Carmichael and most of the other S N C C breed relate best to people like themselves. S N C C started at Southern black colleges, and its return is both logical and useful.

Of the other 'national' organizations, only C O R E is attempting to reach the bottom layers of blackness. Floyd McKissick may not know exactly where he is, but in his year as director he has at least had a good try at finding out where he should be. He quite quickly saw that his base was not in the black and white middle class which had formed the organization. It was deep in the ghetto, and in successive meetings, speeches, and programmes, McKissick has been trying to get there. Still, there are few cities where C O R E is more than a journalistic reference point.

We have been accustomed – trained, even – to think of social change as the work of visible political organizations. That perception is produced by reliance on the 'media', which respond mindlessly to the sheer size and solidity of the institutions that are to be changed. The Lowndes County (Alabama) Freedom Party, the 'Black Panther', was considered unimportant because it could not effectively take power in the state. It could not quickly and decisively shatter the existing social arrangement over a wide area. Parties – traditional or revolutionary –

are assumed to be the only agencies of social movement, and their size is of crucial importance. The significance of a political party, a demonstration, a publication, or an organization is thought to be directly related to its weight in raw numbers.

But somehow that perception lies. In the past few years, dislocations have taken place that utterly destroy the numbers theory. Political parties did not cause tanks to rumble through the heart of the nation's biggest cities in July, they did not bring out soldiers by the thousands, nor destroy billions of dollars' worth of property. Something much more subtle is happening, much more difficult to locate in time or place. The 'civil rights' organizations of last year's headlines are observers like the rest of us; no matter how loud their preachings or insistent their press releases. Black politicians, from Tom to militant, have all they can do just to stay on camera. Rep. John Conyers in Detroit – heralded as the model of the new breed – is as irrelevant to his war zone as Rep. William Dawson is to Chicago's. History moves at breakneck speed. Adam Powell had better stay on Bimini.

Even the Black Power Conference in Newark last month was two weeks too late. It was always to be a rather pointless convention of hustlers, all scrambling for coalitions when they could not win constituencies in the streets. Much of the emphasis of blackness was a charade. The conference met at the white man's hotels and in the white man's churches, and huge white-owned corporations (Bell Telephone, for example) provided presents and facilities. Most of the participants were supported by white payrolls. If they wanted to be where the action was, they could have walked eight blocks from the Military Park Hotel into the Newark ghetto, all burnt and looted and crumbling from

five nights of violence. Late in the conference, a few paid a perfunctory visit; many went as sightseers. None had come when they should have, in the days when 'black power' was incarnate in the streets. By the time the conference took place, it had no bearing on the black revolution which the delegates so eloquently hymned.

So all that has come until now is prologue – not the first steps in a long flight of equal gradations, but preliminaries of a different order from the main event. The manoeuvrings of the last half-decade have been predicated on King's assumption that the American system can somehow absorb the demands of its underclass and its alienated. Now this summer we all know that it cannot. Those who speak in seats of power seem not to have the slightest idea what those demands are, much less know how to meet them. Jerome Cavanagh of Detroit is the most 'progressive' mayor in the country; his battleground is bloodier than Sam Yorty's was. The United Auto Workers tried in Detroit to integrate Negroes into the economic community; no other big union will be nearly so helpful. Anti-poverty programmes, swimming pools, free trips to the ballpark, aid to education; if that was riot control, it failed.

Martin Luther King and the 'leaders' who appealed for non-violence, CORE, the black politicians, the old SNCC *are all* beside the point. Where the point is is in the streets of Detroit and Plainfield, Newark and Cambridge, Maryland. There has been no response by government because there can be no adequate answers, save suppression and investigation, to people who by their actions indict the very legitimacy of that government. 'The name of the game,' a movement operative in San Francisco said recently, 'is chaos.'

But not quite. There was more method in the uprisings

than the press and the public outside could see. Looting was purposeful: the best merchandise went first, and often the least prized goods were left untouched. What observers called indiscriminate 'rampage' was the deliberate and selective destruction by thousands of people of white-owned stores. In Newark, for example, not one 'Soul Brother' was attacked, except by police. That kind of unanimity of purpose (any one or two looters could have invaded a black merchant's store, but they did not) suggests that the rebellions have an authenticity beyond chaotic mob action.

Both Governor Hughes of New Jersey and Mayor Cavanagh said they were 'appalled' at the carnival spirit of their respective ghettos. They watched in horror as the looters hauled out television sets and furniture. But in a strange way, those reactions may be exactly what the looters meant to inspire. Ghetto life has always been a mean caricature of middle-class values: the pink Cadillac bought on credit, the TVs in every crowded flat, the boozing on Saturday nights just as they do in the country clubs. The riots, too, mocked the materialism of the suburbs and the legal violence committed in the name of government. The man tells black people to amass goods and to kill enemies of the state; the people comply in the way they know how. Seen from afar, the riots were scenes in a vast, spontaneous morality play, staged by guerrilla actors in the only real theatre.

There was some sense in the riots, and from them a primitive new kind of politics has come out of the ghettos this summer. There are tough black street leaders who have emerged as local heroes, and although they are not interviewed on Huntley-Brinkley nor appeal to suburban fund-raisers, they are legitimate and powerful. The first wave came out of Watts - Tommy Jacquette, Brother

Crook, and a dozen others. They were street rumblers before the summer of 1965; now they are the new political organizers in the L A ghetto. More like them are spinning out of Newark and Detroit. They are half guerrilla, half ward heeler. They work between organization and revolution, groping for a way in which a bitter and mobilized minority can change a system they know will never accept them as they are. They disdain the numbers game, they avoid the 'visibility' hang-up. They are told it is hopeless, but they are beyond hoping. The strategy is to keep people moving and working, to make noise and trouble, and always to disrupt. Slowly, others in the ghetto learn how to do the same. There is no talk yet of revolutionary institutions; there cannot be, for there is no revolutionary context, and now there can only be approximations. At best, there may be new ghetto organizations: community schools, block councils, tenant unions, police patrols, labour groups. The point now is to extend democracy radically, and that task will involve whites as well as blacks.

The insurrections of July have done what everyone in America for thirty years has thought impossible: mass action has convulsed the society and brought smooth government to a halt. Poor blacks have stolen the centre stage from the liberal élites, which is to say that the old order has been shattered. It is at once obvious that the period of greatest danger is just beginning. The political establishment will swing wide to the right and 'buffers' – the Committees of Concerned Citizens, the defenders of dissent, the liberal politicians who give cover to the Left – may be obliterated. Those who are working in the streets need to have a new coalition behind them to absorb the inevitable calls for repression.

The civil war and the foreign one have contrived this

summer to murder liberalism – in its official robes. There are few mourners. The urgent business now is for imaginations freed from the old myths to see what kind of a society might be reconstructed that would have no need for imperialism and no cause for revolt. At least we know now that even if all Martin Luther King's programmes were enacted, and all Jerome Cavanagh's reforms were adopted, and the Great Society as it is described materialized before our very eyes, there would still be the guerrillas.

The New Politics

The methods of political liberalism have clearly failed to deal with the critical problems of the Sixties: racism, imperialism, 'alienation'; and liberal politicians do not want to admit even that the problems exist. Forces on both sides of the liberal centre – Wallace and Reagan on the Right, Robert Kennedy and McCarthy on the Left – have somewhat foolishly rushed in where the liberals feared to tread, but so far to no avail. Reagan and McCarthy did not move far enough from the Old Politics, and quickly failed their respective constituencies (which are still enthusiastic, however). Kennedy and Wallace kept their distance, but promised little more than rhetoric. At the time of Kennedy's death, his urban projects (such as Bedford-Stuyvesant) were still caught in the middle of the classic crossfire, between militant demands and moderate possibilities.

They'd Rather Be Left

New York Review of Books 28.9.67

To be white and a radical in America this summer is to see horror and feel impotence. It is to watch the war grow and know no way to stop it, to understand the black rebellion and find no way to join it, to realize that the politics of a generation has failed and the institutions of reform are bankrupt, and yet to have neither ideology, programmes, nor the power to reconstruct them. This should be a summer of despair, of flights to Italy or trips on Haight Street. But although there is some of that, it is a time of engagement, not withdrawal. The energy of movement has been not only conserved, but generated. Suburban housewives canvass for anti-war referenda, students counsel their fellows on avoiding the draft, peace candidates gather support, professors plot demonstrations of protest and non-cooperation. Organizers for a hundred causes roam across Appalachia, through urban hill-billy slums and into white suburbs.

On a continental scale, they are less than a minority, hardly a margin. Together, the active, organizing, risk-taking white radicals would fill a quarter of a big football stadium, and the cheer they could raise would barely be heard ten blocks away. For all its vigour and imagination, the Left, old and new, can produce little evidence of success, at least as the newspapers and networks expect it. There is no mass party, nor the hope of one; it is doubtful that the radicals could affect the balance of power in national politics even if they tried. At the local level – in

universities, city halls, and county courthouses, anti-poverty agencies – radical forces have created nuisances but few new bases of real power. Some have been suppressed, many bought off, and most ignored.

Such statistical marginality should count for more than it does, if people weighed their lives against the usual standards of achievement. But there is an internal logic of movement which denies failure, or at least keeps it slightly below full comprehension. People stay working. Activity is better than acceptance, and for some reason it is better to do something than to do nothing. More than that, conditions quickly change, and relevancy is always just around the corner. The war makes shock-waves, here and abroad, that can be neither seen nor foreseen. The black revolt does not proceed step by step, but by explosions and eruptions, of unequal periods and unpredictable intensities. The disasters that make people radical also suggest things for them to do and create a movement to support them. So it is America that makes radicals fight, and if they do not succeed, that too is America's fault.

The paradox of energy and frustration suffused the National Conference for New Politics 'Convention '68 and Beyond' which spread out through the Palmer House in Chicago during the Labor Day weekend. Its call was vague and its objectives undefined, but perhaps for that reason it attracted much of the curious Left in the country, or at least those representatives who could raise the fare. There were Bonwitted peace women, blue-jeaned students, and African-robed Negroes, all mixing uneasily in the halls and public rooms, but rarely breaking through one another's costume and style. It was hard enough for most people just to get used to the hotel, and

there was a rumour at least that the difficulty was mutual: the man who made the booking with NCNP was reportedly sacked by the Hilton chain. The management obviously tried to pop the convention into a memory hole. No mention was made of it on a publicity brochure listing the summer's events. Guests on convention floors were cut off from room service by executive fiat. One can imagine the chagrin of the Max and Wasserman families whose children were marrying during one of the NCNP sessions in a (barely) screened-off section of the main hall. Tuxedoed guests later picked their way through the radicals. At one point, a bongo band with dancers and hangers-on travelled up and down in an elevator car, making music as it went, and stopping on occasional floors for roomier performances. Students and ghetto delegates camped out every night in the foyer by each floor's elevator bank; the house dicks decided not to interfere.

The disruption was even more complete on the convention floor. Half the agenda items were lost to history. Committees disappeared and their members were said to have vanished without a trace. There was hardly more agreement in delegates' perspectives than there was in their appearance. The lowest – and the only – common denominator of rhetoric seemed to be the paraphrase of Joe Hill's dying imperative, red-lettered on a white banner over the grand ballroom: 'DON'T MOURN FOR AMERICA – ORGANIZE!' The conventioners were free to take it literally or symbolically, as they chose.

But if there is a radical movement in America it was there. Its limitations of size may have been depressing to some who entertain fantasies of masses surging down boulevards, and its unruliness certainly disappointed those

who prefer discipline to anarchy. But to most, the scene in the Palmer House was exciting enough. Of the four or five thousand who came, an incredible number stayed until the end. For the Left, there had been nothing quite so big since the Progressive Party convention twenty years ago, although the consequences of that affair were enough to chill nostalgia. Still, there was a Third Party mood in the air, despite disclaimers by the convention leadership and the obvious hostility of the younger delegates.

Three-quarters of the assemblage was white, of a politics ranging from angry-liberal to revolution-now. The centre of gravity was somewhat closer to the former. The press billed it all as the New Left, but that was true only in the sense that it was current and Left. Just a fraction of the people there were the community organizers, the student strikers, and the formulators of 'participatory democracy' which define the New Left political mentality. There were large blocs of Old Left Communists (both under and over thirty), Trotskyites, Maoists, and the usual complement of socialist sects. Probably the majority had no particular doctrinal affiliation. They were united only by what they did not like – the war and Lyndon Johnson – rather than what they liked.

NCNP was white from the beginning. It was formed nearly two years ago in a Washington loft belonging to a legislative assistant to a liberal congressman. Its shape was defined by Arthur Waskow, a hard-working, imaginative Fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies. On occasion, Waskow describes himself, perhaps too narrowly, as 'the last liberal'. NCNP was a bit that way too. Waskow and a few companions invited a number of 'last liberals' and new radicals to a discussion during the week-end of a

SANE anti-war rally in Washington in late November 1965. The NCNP board came out of that gathering, and two presentable and (at that time) exciting political figures were rounded up to serve as co-chairmen: Julian Bond, the young ex-SNCC Georgia assemblyman, and Simon Casady, the recently fired chairman of the California Democratic Party. Both were suffering for their anti-war stands; Bond had been denied his seat and Casady got the axe from Pat Brown. Both were in the Democratic Party, both were putting almost all their energies into electoral politics, and both were busy dissociating themselves from the extremes of their respective scenes.

Given the new location of the political centre, NCNP then was not much more than a jazzy model of an ADA. During the election primaries of the spring of 1966, NCNP began operating in a number of localities. Money was raised from wealthy liberals wisely placed on the board of directors, and funds were parcelled out on the basis of only the sketchiest priorities. Thousands were given to Howard Morgan in Oregon, a 'dove' Democrat who ran a disastrously dull race against Robert Duncan in the Senate primary. Morgan was a hopeless candidate from the start. But only small amounts went to Robert Scheer for his much more promising, and more radical, Democratic primary campaign in California's seventh congressional district against liberal Jeffery Cohelan. It was one thing to spend against a 'hawk', and another to spend against a liberal.

After a while, NCNP realized that it was going to waste a great deal of money promoting boring peace candidates who were building no lasting Left constituencies. They were running as living referenda on the war, which might have been all right if they had won, which

they did not. Waskow and the more radical directors (the most radical were uninterested in election work) pushed money toward the tougher political organizers. Scheer's Community for the New Politics, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party, the Lowndes County 'Black Panther' independent party, Robert Cook's (Connecticut) American Independent Movement, and various committees for independent political action were the favoured models. Scheer had done well in the California primary, but he was the only one. Last autumn, in the general elections, N C N P candidates hardly made a dent at all.

All the time, the directors were planning for the 1968 drive, and the obvious strategy was national. They were hoping for the big 'hoo-ha' (in the N C N P idiom): a mass in-gathering of the Left, to give new politics a higher order of visibility, and perhaps even do something about Lyndon Johnson. It was still unclear exactly what new politics was – something about openness, independence, and participation – and the criteria for newness as against oldness were liable to varying interpretations. As the idea of a national convention began to intrigue N C N P directors last spring, lists of left-wing organizing groups were compiled on a scatter-shot basis. Since 'non-exclusionism' was one of the few firm principles of the new politics theory – and perhaps the controlling one – there was no problem in drawing lines against one or another Left faction. If the C P and the 'Trots' could stand it in the same hall, so much the better.

At some point in the planning of it, the convention changed from a manageable conference of political activists to a monster rally of the whole Left. The staff was unprepared for its direction, and the fund-raisers were hard put to finance it. The staff director, an affable, some-

what distracted college professor named William Pepper, was never the tough political boss necessary for such an operation. He wore dirty white bucks and cared about the war in Vietnam. As the advancing mood of crisis in the country touched more and more people, the guest list swelled. Categories were invented: delegates (from invited organizations), single representatives, and observers. At the end anyone who wanted to could wander in and find a seat up front.

Although most of its sharpest leaders and all of its financial benefactors were white, NCNP had at least made an effort to secure black representation. Stokely Carmichael, in his pre-black-power incarnation, was at the November 1965 meeting, and although he seemed at the time not to think much of the idea, he joined the NCNP Board. A sprinkling of moderately radical Negroes was also thought to be attractive at NCNP gatherings. Few took a continuing interest, and in fact the power – in money and constituencies – lay firmly with white power on the Board. Most of the white members, of course, were keen for the civil rights movement; Was-kow was a theoretician of non-violent action, and most of the others had been excited, and in many cases politicized, by the early sit-ins and marches. The birth of black power may have given some Board members pause, but NCNP came through bravely and supported the new temperament.

By convention time, however, black representation was still thin. In late August, convention staff workers took it upon themselves to petition board members for funds to bring blacks and poor whites to Chicago. In a spiky telegram, convention director Michael Wood (exposer of the CIA's manipulation of the National Student Association) accused the NCNP angels of keeping the

composition of the affair white and middle class, either by design or insensitivity. Wood demanded money for subsidies to poor delegates, and although some thousands were raised a few days before the convention opened, the delegate list was still heavily white.

To most of the white delegates, the convention appeared a paradigm of democracy. It was arranged like the major parties' quadrennial convention or a student council, which was probably the extent of most people's experience with democracy on a mass scale. If there were any ex-student leaders in the crowd, they could tell that it was a lot like NSA congresses, too – signs for each state delegation, vote tabulators, a real parliamentarian, and people shouting 'point of order' all the time. But NCNP tried to go further and build participation into all decision-making; even the convention rules were made in plenary. Although the organization was not strictly comprised of individual memberships, voting was weighted according to the size of 'active' members of invited groups. It was supposed to give an illusion of bottom-up, grass-roots structure.

No one ever decided what the objective of the whole thing would be; presumably that would have been undemocratic. Instead, 'perspectives' were set out. The convention could choose to form a complete third party, or simply an independent presidential slate, or a project for a year of local radical organizing under NCNP. In the meantime, delegates were expected to debate political goals and strategies and think about what it meant to be on the Left.

Somehow, the blacks could not quite see the convention's perfect democracy. To many, or most, it looked like another manipulated vehicle to win white political power with a little help from the black movements. The

sophistication of white political organizations, the minority position of blacks in the country, the availability of white money, and the cleverness of white political operators did not appear to the blacks to be inevitable attributes of democracy. They saw all that as a dodge, however much unintended, to keep the direction of the new politics in the hands of whites. Why couldn't it have been the other way around? If the blacks were the 'vanguard' of the new radicalism, as almost everyone acknowledges, they ought to be calling the political tune, too. In an extraordinarily blunt and effective speech, S N C C's former executive secretary, James Forman, put it to the convention: 'We're going to liberate you whether you want to be liberated or not.'

The blacks who gathered were, like the whites, a mixed lot of organizers and rhetoricians. A group of separatists pulled out entirely early in the convention; those who stayed said the dropouts had no power base to begin with. Other 'militants' (as the militants who remained called them) flaked off as the week-end progressed, and the final group probably represented as real a representation of black power as is likely to be assembled this year — more so by far, it seemed, than the Newark Conference produced last month.

As the convention began, the blacks began to make demands for equality. At first, they were mostly silly or exaggerated. The white N C N P leadership, still proclaiming democracy, took them at face value and professed outrage, or contempt, or — most charitably — disbelief. One board member declared in a style perhaps unbecoming of the new politics, that 'this time the Negroes have gone too far.' A delegate asked, 'What do you people want?' What was happening was that the

black spokesmen were trying to cope with the rhetoric of democracy while confronted with the reality of white domination. They were baffled by the contradictions, even as the whites were, and at first they could hardly articulate the demands for power which they felt. The early attempts were off the mark. But slowly the blacks began to understand the game. A Black Caucus was formed to coordinate and unify the demands. On the second day of the convention, the caucus sent in a list of thirteen points to the plenary – now all white, but uneasy about the fact – as the price of black participation. Some were meant merely to taunt (change the slogan 'peace and freedom' to 'freedom and peace') and some to do that and also state policy (condemn Israel and support 'wars of liberation'). In both cases, the rhetoric was ragged. (At 3 a.m. on the convention's last day, Martin Luther King's aide, Hosea Williams, flew in to try to retrieve Jewish support by softening the Israel resolution to condemn 'the great powers' and recognize the right of Israel to survival. The new resolution was passed by the operative committee but never got to the floor; presumably it will be approved by the new NCNP Board, if anyone cares.)

But the crucial points had to do with the power of blacks in the NCNP itself. Debate on acceptance of the points focused either on the inviolability of the convention's democracy, or the necessity of getting the blacks into the political Left. Those inclined to explain politics in psychoanalytic terms declared that whites who voted for the points were unconsciously masochistic; there was a lot of talk about castration. But for such reasons or others the delegates voted overwhelmingly for acceptance. The next morning, the Negroes came trooping back into the ballroom, happy and expectant,

and seated themselves in a separate black section in the front of the hall.

They were not there for long. Although the caucus's point had specified equal representation for black and white in N C N P leadership, it had left the problem of voting in the plenary unsettled. The caucus leader, a Panamanian named Carlos Russell who works in a Brooklyn anti-poverty programme, announced that the black interpretation of the points demanded equal voting power on the floor as well as in the committees. White delegates groaned; the blacks marched out again.

The second debate was somewhat more orderly than the first – the whites had a better idea of what was coming – but delegates were no less incensed. Waskow made an impassioned speech against acceptance of the fifty-fifty representation; he would agree to a mutual black-white veto, but not to effective black domination. Each race had to be free to organize itself, without hindrance. The black position was that first the members of the Caucus had to be treated as equals. Several delegates walked out; one woman burned her delegate's card. Rich board members spoke against the demand. There was more talk about castration, but again the group voted for the blacks, and now they came in cheering.

On the surface, it was a relatively simple affair, but the manoeuvres on the floor were taking place against an immensely complicated backdrop of sectarian in-fighting and manipulation. Perhaps only the F B I, which alone visited every caucus (probably), listened to every back-room conversation, and monitored every plenary, knows the whole story. The speculation was that the Communists, who fielded a rather well-organized bloc of delegates and farmed them out among various groups, were working for 'unity' at all costs. At first, they opposed the thir-

teen points, for fear the whites would leave if the list were accepted; then they supported the black power vote when it appeared the blacks would leave if it were rejected. Beyond that, at least some of the Communists (could there have been a split along generational lines?) were pushing hard, among whites and within the Black Caucus, for an independent presidential slate – first with the Drs Martin Luther King and Spock, and then with any candidates able to draw a liberal vote. But it was clear to the delegates that King had lost whatever appeal he once had for heading a third ticket. He discouraged the plan himself, and his position against the black uprisings dismayed many delegates. Finally, his speech at a rally on the first night of the convention bored everyone cold. Dick Gregory (who is already running for president without NCNP support) was much more enthusiastically received.

Slowly a caucus began to form from among the young white radicals who had come to the Convention from community organizing projects. Many had been working for Vietnam Summer, a broad and somewhat amorphous collection of anti-war (and to a lesser extent anti-poverty) projects in hundreds of cities. Others were working on draft resistance programmes, leafleting recruits at induction centres or going around talking to draft-age high-school students. Still other organizers worked in old Students for a Democratic Society slum projects, or among poor whites in the South and the mountains, or in any number of campaigns that use local electoral politics as a way of getting people together in multi-issue organizations. In one form or another, they were following Stokely's Order, on the occasion of the whites' departure from SNCC: 'Organize whites.'

The radical organizers seemed to recognize one another

even without knowing the name or face; they were all doing similar things from the same point of view. Hank Werner was running a Vietnam Summer cadre of poor and middle-class organizers in Milwaukee: Marilyn Salzman was trying to devise programmes for teachers who wanted to oppose the Vietnam War in classrooms on the East Coast: John Grove was getting poor whites to fight for power in Appalachia.

They were almost all under thirty; many were way under. They had dropped out of the normal career pattern before it had caught them, and if that might limit their experience (and their ability to understand its implications for the people they were organizing), the act of dropping out also gave them freedom and space. They could not work without it. By the end of the convention, a primitive sense of community had been built within the group. First they had called themselves the Vietnam Summer caucus, then the SDS caucus, then the organizers' caucus, and finally, simply 'the radical caucus'. The members seemed to sense that they were now at the heart of the New Left, and that in effect they were the only 'new politics'.

The organizers are 'the movement'. They impart its style, and what elements of an embryonic ideology as have so far developed. They are not at all sure about conventional models of socialism, and they are so dogmatically against elaborate institutional structures that they cannot conceive of a national party on the Left. Besides, it is hard for them to believe that a power base exists now, or will shortly, to make even a national third party effective. For the organizers, local radical election campaigns may be good organizing vehicles, but only insofar as the community, not the candidate, remains the focus of attention.

One mere reformer's victory may help get reform, but not radical change. Those who cling to hopes of running ambitious national tickets are considered by the organizers as deluded liberals, fellow-travellers, or Henry Wallace hangovers. The organizers opposed a national presidential ticket because it would be an utter waste. It would drain money and energy from long-term projects in exchange for an illusion of strength. The reality is powerlessness. If they are right, and the ticket would have no decisive impact, the disillusionment after the election would make organizing even more difficult.

The organizers wanted NCNP to change its shape into a kind of white SNCC, a national umbrella for local projects, a dispenser of money, recruits, training, materials, communications, and – some day – ideological guidelines if they ever develop. But at this point there is no coherent strategy for community organizing, especially among the middle class. Vietnam Summer presents impressive logistical successes: 26,000 volunteers, 700 local projects, 500 paid staffers, \$400,000 raised. But it is unclear what will remain come fall. At most it will probably be a collection of new organizers, and a body of people slightly more political than it was in June. That is important for movement-building, and perhaps a 'peace candidate' or two will be elected somewhere next year. But it is obviously not much for changing America.

In one way, the strength of the movement of organizers lies in their modesty. If the NCNP means anything in the long run for the Left, it will signify the death of the mystique of a third party, and a recognition that the organizers, not the suburban peace-marchers and reform Democrats, have to lead the movement. At the end, the

organizers got their way. Five minutes before the Black Caucus was going to vote for a third ticket, the organizers made contact with its leaders and asked for a chance to lobby for their point of view. The white radicals, no less than the white moderates, had been intimidated by the very sight of the Black Caucus. It was only after the blacks had gotten the power they sought, and the two caucuses were on an equal footing, that contact suddenly seemed not so strange at all, but imperative. One white organizer admitted he had failed to differentiate, in the early part of the convention, among the blacks: they were the 'faceless black caucus'. Now he discovered what he knew all the time, that the hostility he felt from the blacks was in great measure projected by himself.

The Black Caucus heard the organizers' plans, and agreed to support them. The convention voted for a national system of local organizing projects with an option for 'local' presidential tickets on individual state ballots in states where organizers feel they could be an important tool for organizing. A new NCNP Board was set up with equal black and white representation, and divided into electoral and organizing branches. But although some may try to revive the third party idea (most likely the Communists in the electoral branch), it seems hardly realistic with the strongest part of the black and white movements off in another direction. For a long time, the dominant mode of radical activity will be alternating features of disruption and organization. Both are primitive tactics; together they make a little more sense for carving out a new Left. The NCNP organizing year will probably evolve into other forms, and large demonstrations like the Mobilization planned for 21 October in Washington will be only ambiguously successful. It will not, of course, end the war, although it could encourage

and strengthen the radical movement. And then the organizers have to follow up. That at last is a new politics, and blacks can do it as well as whites. After Chicago, they both are ready to begin.

An Exchange on 'Racism'

New York Review of Books 7.12.67

To the Editors:

Having also observed the 'New Politics' convention in Chicago, we have a few questions for Andrew Kopkind [*N Y R*, 28 Sept.]:

1. Mr Kopkind says, 'If the blacks were the "vanguard" of the new radicalism, as almost everyone acknowledges, they ought to be calling the political tune, too.' a] In what sense did the blacks in the 'Black Caucus' represent the blacks who may be the 'vanguard' – however that is defined? Some of them were from small élitist groups; others were free-lance Chicago militants; very few identified themselves to the convention at large. b] Is a movement seeking to achieve 'participatory democracy' properly run by a dictatorial vanguard? c] If the Black Caucus wished to run the movement, why did they propose no political platform? d] If the object of the convention was to have a black-run movement, why then did most of its spokesmen conclude that black and white movements must be conducted separately?

2. Mr Kopkind states that when the demand was made to let the hundred-odd Black Caucus delegates vote half the convention's votes as a bloc, 'Rich board members spoke against the demand.' We remember only one rich board member speaking, and another not so rich. Could Mr Kopkind name the others he has in mind? – and tell why their wealth impugns their political arguments? Most of the speakers were young people, perhaps ten years younger than the SDS leadership, who were dis-

turbed at the loss of their participatory franchise. Practically all the speakers in favour of the motion were from the DuBois Clubs or the Young Communist League; they denounced 'formal democracy' as a 'tool of fascism' – and apparently the convention agreed.

3. Mr Kopkind describes James Forman's speech as 'extraordinarily blunt and effective'. Why does he not report that Forman was escorted by a flying wedge of bodyguards who pushed whites from the platform and stood glaring at the audience as Forman spoke? Why not report that Forman appointed himself chairman and passed resolutions without letting others speak? An in-joke? Telling how one delegate discovered that 'the hostility he felt for the blacks was in great measure projected by himself,' Mr Kopkind omits mention of the physical intimidation against both blacks and whites practised by members of the Black Caucus and by black teenagers present at the hotel. Mr James Bevel, for example, was physically threatened when he tried to express his differences with others in the Black Caucus.

4. Mr Kopkind admires Mr Forman's statement, 'We're going to liberate you whether you want to be liberated or not.' Could Mr Kopkind tell us what kind of 'liberation' Mr Forman has in mind and how he proposes to go about it? Was the convention an example?

5. Although he says that 'the rhetoric was ragged', Mr Kopkind omits the text of the statement on Israel phrased by the Black Caucus and endorsed three to one by the convention: 'Condemn the imperialistic Zionist war: this condemnation does not imply anti-semitism.' Can Mr Kopkind tell us the political origins of such a resolution? Why it was important to the Black Caucus? What effects is it likely to have on future 'organizing' and other political activity in America?

6. Point 4 of the Black Caucus statement called for 'total and unquestionable support to all national peoples' liberation wars in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, particularly Vietnam, Mozambique, Angola, South Africa and Venezuela.' One of the most popular and frequent assertions on the convention floor was that all guerrilla actions in the world are morally and politically equivalent, and perfectly analogous to the riots in American cities. Is this analysis not important enough for Mr Kopkind to mention? Where does he think it comes from? Does he himself believe that guerilla warfare is equally justified against the governments of, say, Angola and Venezuela? Does he personally support the Viet Cong, believe that most American Negroes do, or that they should?

7. Mr Kopkind states that Vietnam Summer involved '26,000 volunteers, 700 local projects, 500 paid staffers, \$400,000 raised.' Can he give a source for these figures? Checking with members of the Vietnam Summer Steering Committee, we received estimates ranging from one third to one half of Kopkind's statistics.

8. Mr Kopkind is high in his praise of 'getting people together in multi-issue organizations'. He says 'the organizers, not the suburban peace-marchers and reform Democrats, have to lead the movement.' But he also says that 'at this point there is no coherent strategy for community organizing, especially among the middle class.' Why then is it self-evident that the self-styled organizers can create radical institutional change?

Also Mr Kopkind does not tell us what success the community organizers have had so far. How many groups currently exist, with what actual membership, what programmes, what achievements? On what basis of success do they want their programmes duplicated?

Curious that Andrew Kopkind, usually such a caustic critic of American politics, should have donned for this occasion a pair of rose-coloured glasses!

Jeremy Larner
Henry Schwarzschild

New York City

Andrew Kopkind *replies*:

I wish, for the sake of all those increasingly disturbed by developments in black and white radicalism, that the 'Movement' conformed to a more wholesome model, one that would combine revolutionary effect, non-violent strategy, Social-Democratic rhetoric, integrationist sentiment, middle-class reasonableness, and Upper West Side intellectualism, in one nice pink package. There was a time when the Movement had such qualities, but alas, it now has a different shape, colour, and content. It is not the movement of those who saw the Chicago convention as the last best hope for social change, and are now hopeless. They have been outstripped by the rush of events.

Through the perception of wish-fulfilment, they invested the Convention with a significance it never had. NCNP was not the New Left, nor its Central Committee. It could not be made responsible for effecting the programmes or realizing the rhetoric associated with some New Leftists. It is easy, but not very helpful, to set up NCNP as the personification of New Left ideals, and then knock it down when it fails in implementation. To attack the Convention for not achieving 'participatory democracy' (whatever that is, and whatever its achievement entails) seems to me particularly disingenuous.

The problem with the Convention was NCNP itself – its structure, leadership, and programme. It was the creature of its few 'lib-rad' creators and their financial angels

— most of whom, to their credit, consistently disclaim their membership in the New Left. N C N P's style and language were contemporary enough to attract the 'Old New Left' radicals from time to time, in various supporting roles, but it could not and did not direct the Movement. There is no organization or directorate for the New Left, nor is there likely to be, in the next few years. That may be a shame, but the fact of 'unstructure' is at the heart of the Movement mentality, and the fact of fragmentation is what America does to its radical movements.

Many critics of the Convention were traumatized by the 'chaos', which they attributed to the bloody-mindedness of the blacks, the guilt-complexes of the whites, and a general affinity for totalitarianism throughout. My own diagnosis is different. N C N P's was not the 'democratic' organization it appeared to be. Whatever 'democracy' it had was largely abstracted from political reality. The self-appointed leadership selected certain 'activist' groups for membership, weighted their participation according to the prevailing values of the Board, and called it New Politics. Thus, a suburban peace committee with twenty members had participating strength equal to that of a ghetto organizing project with twenty activists. The assumptions underlying such a system seem to be awry. The effect of the suburbanites in their community is entirely different from the organizers in theirs. Middle-class whites perceive political organizations in ways entirely different from poor blacks. It is at least arguable that most poor urban blacks are so alienated as to be in opposition to the government and the status quo, and that their opposition is as strong a radical force as any mounted by middle-class white committees. If that is the case, numerical membership in conventional 'organizations' is irrelevant.

In a post-Convention memorandum, Arthur Waskow observed that 'there is not one movement, but two: one black and one white.' Perhaps that is an over-statement - but there are surely two quite distinct branches to the Movement, and their separate interests and needs are increasingly divergent. The white branch is obsessed with Vietnam and US imperialism on the one hand, and with student affairs on the other. Literally and metaphorically, that is where white radicals are 'at'. They have middle-class needs which must be fulfilled, values which must be upheld, and a style which must be maintained. The black branch is primarily concerned with destroying a culture of oppression and creating a new kind of identity for black Americans. As most people now realize, that has to be done by blacks, with methods which blacks must decide, according to values which blacks must define.

It was naïve to think that representatives of each branch of the Movement could come together in one Hilton hotel and become a functioning, democratic body. The structure of NCNP and its convention made it appear to the blacks that the whites were defining the Movement as a whole, and orchestrating the various elements. That may be a kind of democracy, but it did not strike me as being realistic. 'Formal democracy' as a slogan obviously raises all kinds of shades for critics on the Left, and I hesitate to offend historical sensibilities. But it is always a good idea to look at the relationship of the form of an institution to its function; my own impression was that NCNP had little reason to claim the rights of a democratic organization.

The history of radical action in the past year and a half, at least, should make it clear that blacks as a group in the Movement have to be treated as equals to whites as another Movement group. Surely within the democratic

tradition there are ample precedents for treating blocs as equals despite their numerical composition (the US Senate is one of the more formalistic precedents). The mutuality of assumptions, the bonds of trust, and the community of interests which make democracy possible among different publics does not exist now between the black and white branches of the Movement. It would be easier for us all if the Movement, and the nation, were integrated; but they are not, and it is both foolish and unproductive to pretend that they are. NCNP needed a different set of constitutional arrangements from the one presented by the leadership. It was extremely difficult to see what had to be changed; the blacks intuited, rather than articulated, their subservient role, and the whites were confused by their own good intentions. After much conflict and bitterness, the Convention – pushed harshly by the blacks – produced just such necessary rearrangements. What was worst for the Left, old and new, was that the pushing and shoving was all done on network television, before scores of journalists, and under the gaze of both hostile and friendly observers. If NCNP had materialized with a structure equating blacks and whites, there would have been few squawks. As it was, the blacks had the devil's own time – first of all seeing the dimensions of the box they were in, and secondly, fighting their way out of it.

The *object* of the Convention was not to have a black-run movement. It had been quite the opposite: to have a white-run movement supplied with energy and activism by the blacks. The *result* of the Convention was to ratify the existence of the two separate branches of the Movement and to indicate the few possible bases for coalition and coordination at this time. The Black Caucus did not want to 'run the Movement', but to be recognized for

what it was: the most powerful and most radical motive force in the U.S. The blacks proposed no political platform, I suppose, because they do not now think in those terms. The degree of 'authenticity' of the blacks at the Convention cannot easily be judged, precisely because of the political structure of the black branch of the Movement. Anyway, it is always extremely difficult to tell how closely a radical vanguard represents the mass of people it calls its constituency. (I recall walking with Mr Schwarzschild through the streets of Montgomery, at the end of the Selma March, and wondering whether we, the marchers, represented the thousands of blacks who stood impassively on the sidewalks, and the many thousands more who stayed inside that day.) The blacks I spoke with at the Convention said that the Black Caucus was 'real' – that it reflected, and to a reasonable extent represented, the politics of much of the black part of the Movement. There were certainly serious disagreements and divisions within the Black Caucus; as I reported, the most militant faction left the Convention entirely, but there was considerable to-ing and fro-ing after that. I'm sorry that the Rev. Mr Bevel was threatened, but I trust that he can take care of himself.

No one who has written or spoken about the Convention, to my knowledge, has denied that there was a great deal of foolishness, some bullying, and endemic mindlessness during those days. The controversy seems to be about what all that is relevant to. My own feeling is that it was an inevitable response to a bad situation – N C N P and the Convention. I do not think it signals the 'death of the Movement', because N C N P was not the Movement. Surely the '13 Points' presented the Black Caucus were, in themselves, either divisive, unnecessary, or mischievous. The best that can be said for the resolutions on

the Middle East and the 'wars of liberation' is that they approximated a valid position taken by those blacks and whites who, recently, have been most concerned with movements against US imperialism. Many support the National Liberation Front. They strongly identify with 'Third World' revolutions. Among the young radical whites this summer, Régis Debray was the undoubted culture hero; among the blacks, the influence of Malcolm is still commanding.

Still, many of the whites voted for the points not as an expression of agreement, but of sympathy. They felt (accurately) that they were being tested by the blacks. Unseen by the hostile critics, many whites who voted for acceptance of the points were troubled by their own decision. They believed, however, that some good could still come from the Convention, that it was possible for black and white radicals to find ways of working together. They knew that if the Black Caucus withdrew after such goings-on, that basis for cooperation would disappear. If NCNP had been different and the Convention had, from the start, an equitable distribution of power between black and white, there would have been no need for the resolutions. In the context of the Convention a 'yes' vote for the 13 Points was a metaphor for an expression of trust, not an endorsement of a political programme. Not the Black Caucus, but NCNP, had trapped the white delegates in a classic political dilemma, from which there was no completely noble escape. But it is unfair, I think, to accuse the white delegates of voting for resolutions contrary to their values. The resolutions did symbolize notions of revolution, Black Power, and anti-imperialism which most white radicals would support. I don't think they would have voted for anything contrary to those values. But there were parts of the reso-

lutions to which most of the delegates, in a different political context, would have objected, and their acceptance of the whole package at N C N P was a disagreeable task. If there were any moral virgins before, there are none after that Convention.

The basis for cooperation of the black and white radicals is mutual respect for each other's needs, and understanding of the distant goals of institutional change. Coalition implies a rough equality of power; otherwise the relationship of one branch to the other would be as master to servant. But cooperation does not mean that whites must approve of each strategy the blacks devise, or support every policy or statement, nor, of course, that the blacks do the same. It does mean, however, that each branch has to let the other define the limits of its movement, to suffer the consequences, and get the rewards. That is possible within the committees of organizers which emerged from N C N P, because they are concerned with local projects and not a huge national front.

There is good reason to question the 'success' of the organizing mode of the radical movement, as I did at some length. From what I have seen of the Movement in the past three years, local organizing offers the best opportunity to bring more people into radical activity, and to stimulate them to the greatest effort. I do not confine that judgement to the few SDS-style slum-organizing projects that still exist. I would include all the local student and adult local anti-war movements, the peace vigils, ballot referenda, pickets and marches in hundreds of communities; the scores of 'student power' projects on campuses; the faculty and student protests against university involvement with military contracts; the anti-draft unions; organization in the Southern mountains, the

Black Belt, the Spanish-speaking Southwest, the Indian and Puerto Rican minorities, and poor white areas; middle-class organizing projects around education, health, inflation, electoral politics, and environmental problems; radical unionizing in the teaching, health, and social work professions; the few anti-war projects in the big unions; community-control campaigns, such as the fight of East Harlem parents for bureaucratic decentralization and control of IS-201; new styles of labour organizing among the unorganized, such as the grape pickers' strike in Delano, Calif., or the Las Casitas strike in Texas; new forms of radical journalism.

There are thousands of such projects; they have not changed America nor brought the power structure to its knees, but they have built a movement with a broad constituency. Experience indicates that the Third Party or 'national organization' idea, counterposed to the organizing idea at Chicago, would be unproductive, if not positively destructive at this point. The organizers claim that there is no basis yet for a 'united front' which a Third Party needs, that the base is too thin and factionalized for effective competition on the stage of national politics, and that the effort would drain energies and money from the 'nitty-gritty' work at the local level. There are elaborate arguments on both sides (and in the middle), but the most important reason to support the organizers is that in them lies the locus of the Movement. They are the most energetic, imaginative, and committed force, black and white, separately and together. If they will not devote themselves to a single national programme, there is little purpose in pursuing it. There are hypothetical strategies which would bring change more quickly than local organizing; but a realistic assessment of the Movement now suggests to me that the organizing mode is at least pos-

sible, and the others are not. I really cannot see how that is a rose-coloured vision.

Vietnam Summer was within the organizing perspective, and many of its workers were in the Radical Caucus. I spent three days at the project's evaluation conference in late August, and two days at the national headquarters in Cambridge. I also visited about a half-dozen local projects. The figures I quoted were 'presented' (my word) by the Vietnam Summer directors (see *Vietnam Summer News*, and 'Vietnam Summer 1967', the final report of the project staff). I did not count the workers or the dollars. I did say, however, that the raw figures had no clear meaning in themselves. The success of the project, in movement-building or shorter-term political effect, is still ambiguous.

I can't produce the bank statements from the accounts of Board members who spoke against the Black Caucus's demands, although I believe that some were affluent, others comfortably middle-class. Others may have been as poor as churchmice. Wealth impugns nothing, but the use of it to influence politics seems to me at least worth reporting.

Finally, a word about Forman's promise (threat?) of liberation. Racism pervades American culture and society. Radicals and liberals partake of it as well as conservatives and reactionaries, because they all share in the culture. I reported that many of the white radicals were afraid to make contact with the blacks, and they responded too strongly to the idea of 'separate' movements. Other whites could not understand why the blacks were behaving so stubbornly, or so high-handedly. Although most of the whites were sincerely tolerant – more so than the blacks, by far – they reacted politically in ways

which showed that essentially they considered themselves wiser, more articulate, more sophisticated, and more mature than the blacks. But there is an important difference between racist feeling and structural racism. Awareness of racial identity is a universal phenomenon, and in its most extreme and irrational forms (from Afrikaners to the organized US Black Nationalist fringe) it is destructive. But structural racism is a political, not a personal phenomenon. It involves the systematic exploitation of one race by another, which considers itself superior – as the Jews by the Nazis or the Negroes by the white Americans. Whites who have Negro maids, or who have their shoes shined by Negro bootblacks, or who vote for the one Negro in their school to be class president, are all participating in American racism. They would be hard put to do otherwise, for it is not in themselves but in the constellation of forces – the economy, politics, status – that the fault of racist exploitation lies. Paternalism, fear, segregation, and separatism flow from that constellation. Breaking the pattern is dreadfully disturbing, if it is possible at all. It involves redistribution of power on a broad scale and, incidentally, the crushing of a few egos (some of them radical) along the way. That is what Black Power is all about, and what Forman meant by 'liberation'. We had all better get used to it.

When political change is most difficult, it is natural for those who care the most to criticize the political actors for their failure. It is distressing, but understandable, to hear the hostility of many sincere liberals and radicals when they speak of the Movement and its activists. But it is America, not the Movement, which is sick. The logic of this society makes painless change impossible. The system – that constellation of forces and institutions – fragments oppositions, isolates resisters, co-opts dissent, monopolizes

the media. The best work of the most dedicated radicals turns to ashes. Mississippi racism is not the fault of the S N C C workers who failed in 1964 to overturn the power structure; escalation of the war is not the fault of the marchers who peacefully marched in opposition to it; the emptiness of middle-class life cannot be blamed on the beats and bohemians who condemn it. The sheer invulnerability of the society has made it impossible. But people go on because it is better to do that than to do nothing, and to go on means becoming increasingly militant and radical. The Movement may often seem pathetic, and worthy of pity; but it is not worthy of contempt.

Some years ago, a Communist mayor of San Gimignano tore down a rather fascistic statue of an idealized Italian soldier, and had inscribed on the pavement below: 'Blessed is the country that has no need of heroes.' I modestly offer the suggestion to *Dissent* (for its masthead) and the Lawyers' Constitutional Defense Committee (for its letterhead) that they both adopt a paraphrase: 'Blessed is the country that has no need of radicals.' But that will be another country.

Wallace

New Statesman 2.8.68

'The Wallace Problem' has found its place in the lexicon of American dilemmas beside the Negro problem, the hippy problem, the crime problem, the student problem and the Vietnam problem. Like the others, this freshest disaster is presumed to be an alien strain in the native soil, a kind of undeserved curse upon an innocent nation. Various remedies are proposed, but all of them assume that the Wallace problem – that is, the presidential candidacy of the former Governor of Alabama – is a pathological affliction which can (and should) be removed.

On closer examination, the Wallace campaign seems as American as apple pie (at least, apple strudel). The break-up of the major-party coalitions has allowed various fragments of the electorate to recognize their own exclusion from power. In earlier times the coalition candidates seemed to speak for their broad bases: Lyndon Johnson in 1964, for instance, presumed to represent labour, Negroes, intellectuals, liberal suburbanites, ethnic minorities, farmers, welfare recipients, and all the other elements in his consensus. One by one, most of those constituencies slipped away from the Democratic organization. Now, the organization man – Vice-President Humphrey – can count on only limited support. It is left to others to pick up the fragments of the coalition.

Alone among the announced candidates, George Wallace articulates the most urgent concerns of white working-class America. It is a segment of 'the base' which, after Robert Kennedy's death, eludes all other major politi-

cians. Wallace understands their exclusion from political consideration, their material insecurity, their sense of forgottenness. Humphrey and Governor Rockefeller may patronize slum Negroes, but they studiously ignore lower-class whites. Senator McCarthy, the most élitist candidate since John Quincy Adams, avoids the blacks in particular and patronizes the poor in general. 'Well-educated people support me, badly-educated people oppose me,' he said with satisfaction (and accuracy) after the Oregon primary. Nixon really has some half-way decent proposals for black community development, but can hardly swing with the under-class.

With a fine sense of the historical moment, Wallace raises the real questions which are most pressing on his white following. The two major parties, he says, are 'tweedledum and tweedledee', and will do nothing to improve the lot of ordinary whites. Big corporations and big federal bureaucracies, he continues, act without control by the people or concern for their lives.

All that is true, and it is the fault not of fascist demagogues or poor white racists, but of the liberal Democrats who have been ruling the country. Unfortunately – probably inevitably – Wallace clothes his truths in quasi-fascist demagoguery and crypto-racism. As the liberals allege, he has organized the largest unattached segment of the old coalition into a reactionary force of frightening magnitude. But the real 'problem' is that no one else will organize them for a more progressive purpose.

Typically, the press and the conventional politicians are approaching the Wallace campaign with a mixture of bewilderment and hysteria. One day the polls show Wallace winning sixteen or twenty per cent of the national presidential vote, and the columnists begin to consign the republic to Hitlerite dictatorship. The next day, an enter-

prising reporter is assigned to speak with real live Wallace supporters, if he can bear it, and comes back with estimations of their insignificance. One *New York Times* man visited a Wallace office in St Louis and pronounced its location 'remote' – but relative to what he did not say.

Appalled by the possibility that Wallace may win enough electoral votes to deny either major candidate the majority necessary for election, a bipartisan group of congressmen have begun a campaign to bind the electoral college and the House of Representatives (which decides the election if there is no electoral majority) to decide in favour of the candidate with the largest total popular vote. That would eliminate Wallace's role as a 'third force', holding his few electoral votes as a prize for whichever major candidate meets his policy demands. Wallace, of course, sees the campaign to circumvent the constitutional regulations as a 'conspiracy' against an independent.

Despite his illegitimacy in respectable circles, Wallace's campaign seems to attract and excite crowds in both the North and South. His appearances follow a certain formula: pretty girls collect money and petitions, a country-music band plays old favourites, and then Wallace delivers a set harangue. He inveighs against 'communists, anarchists and revolutionaries', as well as pot-smokers, long-haired students and snobs. 'When the *New York Times* looks down the nose at you, you remember that the editor of the *New York Times* is one man and you're one man,' he says. There are two or three sentences he uses at every meeting, and audiences have come to expect their approach and cheer their delivery. 'If anybody ever lies down in front of my car,' he says on the subject of non-violent protest, 'it will be the last car he ever lies down in front of in his life.' Later, he suggests that 'we ought to

turn this country over to the police for two or three years and everything would be all right.' In between those show-stoppers, he talks a great deal about economic issues and the old virtues of privacy and individual freedom from government restraint. But although his speeches are full of coded references to racist policy (specifically, against integration in schools and housing), he is careful to use no outright racial slurs.

Of course the impact of Wallace's campaign is 'terrifying', even if there is no possibility that he could be elected president. His candidacy already has done some damage, by pushing both major parties to consider methods of attracting Wallace supporters into their own camps. It is not very pleasant to hear the Wallace line on the TV every night. But the campaign should also be instructive, for it exposes some of the realities of American political life which the bland, banal rhetoric of Hubert Humphrey (for one example) serves only to conceal. The politics of democracy really has failed to develop leadership and provide representation for the excluded people of the society, the 'invisible' ordinary people whose lives, Wright Mills once said, 'seem nowadays to be a series of traps'.

James Baldwin was one of the first to point out that the 'Negro problem' was really the white problem – black crime, family instability and revolutionary violence were facts of a white racist society. In the same way, the hippy culture, the drug scene and the drop-out phenomenon flow from the alienation produced by the 'straight' world. The 'Wallace problem' – bigotry, super-patriotism, and anti-intellectualism – appears naturally as a consequence of failed liberal democracy. The 'American problem' is undemocracy. Like a lot of people, George Wallace and his followers are victims too.

Reagan, Ex-Radical

'He Plays Pat Brown Better Than Pat Brown'

New Republic 15.7.67

Ronald Reagan is selling out. Not completely, or immediately, or even obviously; the politician's art, like the actor's, is to make things seem what they are not. But disbelief cannot be willingly suspended forever, and in the great back lot of Reagan country, the most perceptive of his followers are beginning to realize that his 'Creative Society' is not the plot they had expected.

Reagan wrote (or at least read) the original script during his excruciatingly long campaign for the Republican gubernatorial nomination and the subsequent duel with Pat Brown. As treatments go, it was expensive; the whole affair cost Reagan's backers about \$5 million. In outline, Reagan developed a catalogue of the Devil's works in modern America: big government, high taxes, bureaucratic waste, crime in the streets, the new (for him) economics, and those aspects of health, education and welfare policy which seem to contradict the Protestant ethic.

It was not a bad list. The issues were real, even if crudely defined, and the two-term Democratic administration had for the most part failed to deal with them. Fearful and a little hysterical, the Democrats attacked not only the inadequacy of Reagan's proposals, but also the legitimacy of the issues and his motives for stating them. It became liberal heresy even to acknowledge the oppressive effects of centralized bureaucracy, or the threat of social upheaval, or the inequality of the tax system, or the consequences of a no-win war in Asia. The most they could

offer were four more years of ambiguous, probably irrelevant, minutely incremental 'improvement'. Reagan saw that most voters were in no mood for tolerance. He offered them a vision of a revolution, and he articulated their deepest concerns. If it added up to much less than a programme and hardly more than a complaint, it still worked to win him the governorship last November by a million votes.

On the surface, Reagan seemed to have a mandate for sweeping systematic change. He was at the head of an army of ideological infantrymen; they had all watched him on TV the night in 1964 that he had made his big pitch for Barry Goldwater, and they knew that some day he would take command himself. Now he was Goldwater's reincarnation, only smoother and warmer and somehow more believable. The location and composition of Reagan's army were crucial for its victory. Where it's *at* is the glassy, grassy flatland suburbs beneath the mountains, where even the palm trees are imported.

Here are nine million people with a life rich and full of everything except meaning. Families are 'units', salaries are paid in 'K's' (*i.e.*, kilodollars, on the analogy of kilowatts, as in the phrase, 'I'm making twelve K a year'), and there is good medical evidence that kidneys are swimming-pool shaped. Certainly everything else is. The inhabitants belong to a new working class, not a new middle; they are wage-slaves in air-conditioned sweat shops, with no ILGWU in sight. They have jobs which give them almost enough money, almost enough status, almost enough security, and absolutely no sense of creation or purpose (not for nothing a 'creative' society appeals strongly). They are programmers, systems analysts, chain-store dentists, servicers, processors, and plasticized professionals with neither past nor future. They have no

more sense of participation in the product of their labours than an assembly-line worker who affixes a screw (or hits a button which affixes a thousand screws) feels in a finished Mustang.

One theory holds that Southern Californians have the attitudes they do because they are so content; they allow no threats to the happiness they derive from their property. It is more likely that they are miserable, even if they would not put it in those terms. They can't manage the credit payments, they wonder why their kids blow pot, they don't understand the war, they stall on the freeways and choke on the smog.

Reagan and his organizers saw (as the Democratic liberals did not) that the mega-people of Southern California are potentially radical, not merely status-quo minded. They don't want more; they want different. Reaganism – the successor and refinement of Goldwaterism – made sense to millions of people precisely because it was a movement.

But Reagan as a political campaigner bound himself in a coalition that made radical politics difficult. The infantrymen supplied the precinct work and (some) vote power. Reagan, however, needed more than that, and as his campaign grew more costly and more serious he turned to the traditional sources of power. Like Goldwater, Reagan had threatened the economic and social interests of the big corporate managers. They wanted expansion, government manipulation of the economy, labour peace, satisfied minorities and international tranquillity (or at least low-cost hostility). In California, as elsewhere, most of the nationally oriented economic forces had fallen in with the Johnson campaign.

In the early days of the primary campaign, that same business bloc, and its political allies, avoided Reagan like

poison. There was a frantic search for alternatives: first, Sen. Thomas Kuchel, then former San Francisco Mayor George Christopher. But Kuchel shrank from the fight, and Christopher – who finally ran in the primary – came too late with much too little. When it was over, Reagan moved to include part of the ‘moderate’ force in his campaign, as Goldwater had never effectively done. But Reagan could hold out the best promise of all – winning. Those with money and influence knew that if they joined Reagan early enough, they could ultimately direct the course of his administration. As one Republican legislator, an early and dedicated opponent of Reagan, explained: ‘We all campaigned for Ronnie. Hell, the guy was going to win, so we might as well have some voice. He bought that.’

As he took office, Reagan was still thinking more of the infantry and the rich entrepreneurs who had financed his campaign, rather than the come-lately forces on the margins of the team. His inauguration was an emotional visionary production staged at midnight in the capitol. Above the dome flew a tattered state ‘bear flag’ which a wounded soldier had carried home from Vietnam. Inside, Reagan spoke of the ‘miracle’ of (small-r) republican government, where ‘every man, woman and child becomes a shareholder with the first penny of tax paid.’ There were echoes of the Kennedy inaugural mixed in with some very contemporary rhetoric about participatory democracy:

‘The path we will chart ... demands much of those chosen to govern, but also from those who did the choosing. [It] turns away from any idea that government and those who serve it are omnipotent. It is ... impossible to follow unless we have faith in the collective wisdom and genius of the people. . . . Government will lead but not

rule, listen but not lecture. It is the path of a Creative Society. ... If this is a dream, it is a good dream. ... Let this day mark the beginning.'

The beginning, in fact, came a few days later, and in a way it was also the beginning of the end. The first decree of the Creative Society was (in the form of an off-hand remark by the finance director) a recommendation that the budget for the nine University of California campuses and the eighteen state colleges be drastically reduced. The university regents had requested \$278 million in state funds; Reagan proposed \$196.5 million. Furthermore, Reagan wanted students to pay tuition for the first time in modern history: not much – just a few hundred dollars or so, as a token of their participation in the expensive programme of higher education. The regents, the college trustees, and the academic 'community' reacted with instant fury. The cuts, they said, would reduce University enrolment by 22,400 students (90,000 are expected in September), and might necessitate the closing of three campuses. The colleges would be similarly crippled. University President Clark Kerr and College President Glenn Dumke retaliated by closing all admissions for the next term, in order to bring the impact of the cuts home.

Students marched, faculties raged. The *Los Angeles Times*, perhaps more than any other single institution the epitome of the California 'establishment', roundly attacked the governor whose election it had, a bit reluctantly, supported.

'Governor Reagan jumped most heavily on the University, possibly because of public resentment over disorders on the Berkeley campus,' a *Times* editorial said. (It did not say that the paper had helped prepare that resentment.) It called the cuts 'false economy', and a 'repeal' of

the semi-sacred Master Plan of Higher Education. 'No substantial reductions will be possible in the higher-education budget if the quality of such education is to be maintained and expanded.'

If Reagan had appeased the people, he had also alienated the major economic interests. California corporatism, perhaps more than any other state's, relies heavily on the production of technicians and intellectuals to support its 'infrastructure'. Huge technological parks go up around every new campus, the better to feed off the state-subsidized resources. California's agri-business, the richest in the country, owes much to the technology developed in subsidized research.

Either Reagan had completely misunderstood the nature of the power structure in California, or he really thought he could bring it to its knees. As if the budget cuts and the tuition plan were not bad enough, he compounded the antagonism by helping the regents out-flank Clark Kerr, and then fire him from the university presidency. Reagan deserves only a measure of blame, but it was hard to separate the internal politics of the affair from Reagan's pattern of 'attacks' on the educational system. For a while, Reagan rode the hobby horse of anti-intellectualism; the state, he said, should not be 'subsidizing intellectual curiosity'. There were too many silly courses, like the one at Davis which taught students how to demonstrate and burn the governor in effigy (it actually was a seminar in the history of non-violent change). But in the end, all the attacks were pointless. The regents voted against tuition, Reagan began 'revising' his budget recommendations to a point where they were only \$10 million from the regents' figure, and he hardly said another word – publicly or at regents' board meetings where he sits – about higher education.

Bloodied and only slightly bowed, Reagan still had one or two more revolutionary acts to attempt before retiring. His second massive budget cut was in the administration of mental hospitals. Their population had been declining (forty per cent in three years), largely because of improved therapy and the use of outpatient clinics. Reagan proposed elimination of 3,700 jobs at the hospitals, the closing of fourteen state outpatient clinics, and the assumption of community mental health care by county centres. The state would save \$17.7 million (although there would be an added burden on property taxpayers, as there would if those who were denied or could not afford to go to the university and colleges went instead to community junior colleges).

Again the established interests reacted violently. 'First Reagan stood in the schoolhouse door,' an economist said later, 'then he stood in the nuthouse door.' Reagan was accused of reviving the 'snake pit' and of disregarding the unfortunates of society. The *Times*, which had originally commended the cuts, called Reagan's plan to give some patients the work of fired employees 'repugnant'.

Slowly, and with elaborate rationalization, Reagan began to cave in on mental health as he did on higher education. His executive assistant, Philip Battaglia, announced that 800 jobs previously eliminated would be restored. Instead of firings, there would be 'phasing out'. Reagan then developed a new interest in community health care, and declared that it was not he but those who wanted to maintain the old 'warehouse' style of hospital care who were responsible for the snake pits.

Both education and mental health were right-wing issues, but Reagan had more in mind than political pandering. He felt he had a prophetic mission to cut the budget, and fifty-seven per cent of the cuttable funds are

lodged in those two areas (eighty-three per cent are in education and welfare as a whole). Reagan's ideas on finances were not original. Gov. James Rhodes began a similar programme in Ohio in 1963, and sold the package, in modified form, to Governor Romney in Michigan and Gov. Dan Evans in Washington. Shortly after his inauguration, Reagan met with Rhodes' finance director, Richard Krabach, who explained how he had fired 5,000 state employees, slashed Ohio's budget 9.1 per cent across the board, and set up a volunteer task force of businessmen to review state operations, resulting in savings of \$68 million.

Reagan and his finance director, a Los Angeles management consultant named Gordon Paul Smith, loved the ideas. They quickly followed suit, upping the stakes in proportion to California's needs. They ordered budget cuts of ten per cent for all agencies, trimmed more off education and welfare, froze employment at current levels (eliminating 4,514 new jobs), and appointed their own task force of 200 businessmen, most of whose names were kept secret because (the chairman said) 'a lot of people will try to contact them to try to sell things ... and tell them how to conduct the study.'

Reagan promised to 'squeeze, cut and trim' the budget, and after a tremendous expenditure of energy he came up with a low, low \$4.6 billion figure, slightly higher than Pat Brown's last effort (although Brown later added more funds). But one thing led to another, and before Reagan was through, he himself had added another \$434 million – for a state low-income medical plan, for property tax relief for local school districts, and for much of what he had (in his inaugural speech) attacked as 'just goodies dreamed up for our supposed betterment.' On 30 June, just before the midnight deadline, he signed

a \$5.93 billion budget, \$38 million larger than he had even proposed. He felt compelled to make only relatively small blue-pencil vetoes, and only token cuts in the education figure.

Reagan was discovering, rather late in the first reel, that the 'goodies' served the interests of the big free-enterprisers as well as the creeping socialists – and perhaps there wasn't that much difference between them. The technology companies, the aerospace industry, and to some extent the banks and utilities have more than a passing concern with social services. In many cases, they are eager to get into the market themselves. Under the Brown administration, the (lagging) aerospace corporations began developing ambitious programmes to analyse and direct pollution control, highway projects, prison reform, welfare, crime reduction, and of course education on all levels. To restrict expansion in those areas, Reagan would have to risk alienating the men who run (and, eventually, the stockholders who own) Litton Industries, or the Bank of America, or the big data processors. In the modern corporatist state it is impossible to separate out the powers in business from those in health, education and welfare. For example, Dr (of medicine) Franklin Murphy, the chancellor of U C L A, is also one of the most influential directors of the Ford Motor Company, and sits on the boards of such diverse companies as McCalls and Hallmark.

So Reagan was stuck with the biggest budget in the history of any state in the nation, and to finance it he came up with the biggest tax increase – \$946 million – that any governor had ever proposed. Like his original budget, it was weighted, although not entirely devoted, to the interests of his new working-class base. It called for a ninety-eight per cent ('temporary') rise in income taxes, to

come primarily from the upper brackets. There was an eighteen per cent rise in corporate taxes, and a ten per cent increase in the tax on banks. Reagan called for an increase in the sales tax (to five per cent) but he also extended it to commercial purchases of gas and electricity, and to other business sales (he succeeded in infuriating the big agricultural packers by advocating a tax on containers). Moreover, he refused to eliminate the cumbersome business inventory tax (each year firms have to pay taxes on the value of their stocks) and he kept his promise to relieve the local property tax burden by giving state subsidies. He refused to include a provision for withholding income tax on a regular basis; people ought to 'feel' the pain of taxes, he said.

'Moderate' Republicans and Democrats in the legislature responded by submitting their own tax plan, which would get things back on a proper footing again by concentrating on hitting the poorer people in the society. The moderates' programme would also include sales and corporation tax increases, but it would eliminate the inventory tax and substitute an across-the-board sixty per cent surcharge on income tax, instead of the complex formula Reagan wanted. And it would institute withholding.

The tax bill was still in legislative committee last week, but Reagan was ready to cave in on the essential matter of the income tax, and he was willing to suspend the plan for property tax relief. Slowly Governor Reagan was becoming a good liberal corporatist.

It would be a mistake to see Reagan as a neo-populist reformer, doing battle with the fat cats in the interests of the poor. Although some of those attitudes seem to crop up in every California administration since Hiram Johnson's, there is ample evidence that Reagan does not much care about the poor. His base was simply the not-rich. His

welfare programme is almost nonexistent. He wants to close many of the centres which Brown set up after the Watts revolt to centralize state services. To get people off the welfare dole, a very progressive objective, he would rely almost entirely on the kind of job training and placement service set up by H. C. 'Chad' McClellan in Watts. McClellan, a former president of the National Association of Manufacturers and an Eisenhower Under Secretary of Commerce, thinks that private enterprise can clean up poor Negroes, change their 'attitudes' and their accents, and give them decent jobs in the mainstream economy. He claims to have turned the trick with fully half of the unemployed in the Watts 'curfew' area. But his statistics, not to mention his assumptions, are open to broad attack and a great deal of suspicion, and it is hard for most anti-poverty workers to believe that his kind of programme can make a difference; probably not more than five per cent of those on welfare are 'employable' in any significant sense.

Reagan made McClellan director of employment. The idea of a N A M president overseeing the labour market was a good example of Reagan's early appointment philosophy. His savings and loan commissioner had been a consultant to the council of savings and loan banks; his real estate commissioner was an open advocate of repeal of the fair housing law; an appointee to the Board of Education (later withdrawn) was a San Diego doctor who had overthrown a local school board in a recall election on a platform of prayers for the classroom; the agricultural commissioner was a rancher and member of the Right to Work Committee; the labour commissioner is a businessman, and the industrial relations commissioner is a former corporation executive and management consultant. His clemency commissioner is a former assistant

DA in Oakland who made brief (and minor) headlines last year by helping the House Un-American Activities Committee prepare its case against the Berkeley war protesters. Some of Reagan's appointments were more reasonable; he made many good choices in areas of conservation and resource development – highly important to the hemmed-in basin-dwellers in the Southland. But the overall statistics are revealing: of Reagan's first thirty appointees, eleven were ranchers and twelve were financial types.

It is hard to place all the appointees in a single political bag, but many legislators – who watch the appointments closely – get the impression that there are two groups, and that a change has come about from the early 'team' members to the later. The first represented the interests of the Southern California ideologues; they were for budget cuts, low taxes, slight economic manipulation. Many were big businessmen, but their interests were either personalistic or confined to the state. Reagan's original advisers were wealthy Southern California entrepreneurs: Holmes Tuttle, a Ford dealer; Henry Salvatori, a Goldwater financier and an oil industry man; the late Cy Rubel, president of a local oil company; and filmland egotists without number. Reagan had some support from the big utilities, the banks and the savings and loan companies, all of which are heavily regulated and traditionally throw their weight around the politics of both parties. Reagan has begun to please them more and more; he recently spoke quite out of turn for a telephone rate increase, which won't sit well with old friends in the suburbs. The aerospace, electronics and national manufacturing industries had to be convinced that Reagan would look out for them. After a while, he started sending them signals. His budget was expansionist, and so was his tax bill. He gave in on the deepest cuts for education and

on tuition and he promised a scholarship programme if tuition ever goes through. He backed down on mental health, and he seemed uninterested in pushing for legislation that might be considered anti-union, or anti-civil liberties, or anti-civil rights (he will agree to 'modification' instead of repeal of the Rumford open housing law). He consolidated his gains with the corporatists, finally, by filling up the survey 'task force' from their ranks.

'The education and the mental health things were just sops to those right-wingers down South,' one liberal Republican legislator said privately a few weeks ago. 'He stopped that kind of stuff a while ago. Now he throws them a few words or promises, and his political manoeuvres don't mean much. He'll still talk about riots, and capital punishment, and the beatniks, and pornography, but he's finking out on his shock troops. Ronnie's people don't want the right-wing around them. Spencer and Roberts [the P R firm that handled Reagan's campaign] culled the kooks out of the campaign structure, and they're isolated. Some of the organized Right here – and all of it outside California – still think they've got a man on a white horse. But a lot of his fanatics are disillusioned, and some are jumping on the Wallace-for-President bandwagon.'

The most prominent dropout has been State Senator John G. Schmitz, the one 'avowed' Birch Society member in the senate, who represents part of Orange County, the Bavarian heartland of Reaganism. Utterly shattered by the governor's budget and tax programme, he declared it 'a tragic end to the brightest hope on the American political scene today', and a betrayal of 'the campaign promises which Governor Reagan kept during the first two months of his administration.' Sighing the long sad sigh well known to so many on the Left who have seen

their heroes turn away from the gates of paradise, Schmitz predicted that 'many of the best of our citizens may never again be willing to trust the word of a seeker or holder of high political office.'

So Ronald Reagan turns out to be a kind of Hubert Humphrey of the right, and for the same familiar reasons. He keeps the ideological rhetoric flowing, and he may fool himself by promoting programmes he feels will do 'some good' and take a 'first step' toward the old radical objectives. But his main function is to disarm his most trusting troops, by adopting their words and never giving them the goods. He rationalizes his own position by calling himself a pragmatist, and may even believe that he is working from the inside. But he is out for himself alone.

For Reagan, like Humphrey, that means national power. Reagan is campaigning for the Presidency, as anyone can see, and he is mending all the fences in sight. After a bad start, he is even cosying up to the legislature, which had its doubts. One Republican said recently, 'there are three big phonies in politics in this state - Sam Yorty [mayor of Los Angeles], Max Rafferty [education superintendent] and Ronald Reagan. At least Yorty and Rafferty are politicians.' Reagan is getting along better with Assembly Speaker Jesse Unruh, a brilliant politician of questionable allegiance, who is the leading Democrat extant in the state. Since flexibility and moderation are still new to him, Reagan may have some stylistic difficulties. Last month he flip-flopped so openly on the abortion issue (he finally signed a reform bill) that one right-wing opponent of the measure left the Reagan camp in disgust. 'That guy's such a good actor,' he said, 'he plays Pat Brown better than Pat Brown.'

Reagan has made his peace with Tom Kuchel, but it was not easy for either man. Reagan supported Kuchel's

primary opponent in 1962; Kuchel supported Christopher against Reagan, and 'went fishing' in the general election. Now Reagan wants party unity more than anything. He told a distinctly hostile convention of right-wing Republicans recently that they should support the 'candidates chosen by the entire party in the primary,' and avoid 'narrow sectarianism' at the risk of going down in a 'blaze of glorious defeat.' The same group had very nearly accused Kuchel of treason. Reagan's men are quietly telling the big-money sources to boycott Max Rafferty's campaign to oppose Kuchel in the Senate primary next year.

Reagan's aides are practically falling over themselves preparing the presidential strategy. They like this scenario: the already deflated Romney boom collapses, and his support goes to Rockefeller. Percy can't get enough exposure quick enough to get a boom going. Nixon loses a few crucial primaries, Reagan does well in Nebraska and Oregon, and he consolidates the middle and right of the party. Those are the people who work hardest and vote in greatest numbers. Goldwater and the western governors (eleven of the thirteen in the region are Republican) swing to Reagan, and he goes into the convention battling with Rockefeller. There, it will be a tough contest, but if worse comes to worst, Reagan will accept the vice-presidential nomination. Nationally, it would be a strong ticket, and even California liberals would be attracted.

'Of course,' one legislator said not long ago, 'I'm for Reagan for vice president. We all are. Anything to get him out of California.'

Waiting for Lefty*

New York Review of Books 1.6.67

R.F.K.: The Man Who Would Be President

by Ralph de Toledano, Putnam, 387 pp., \$6.95

In America, the cult of personality is the faith of the outcast, the politics of salvation. To be revered beyond reason, the cult-hero need not be particularly talented (Barry Goldwater, for example) nor especially commanding (Adlai Stevenson). But he must express, however ambiguously, the unrealized hopes of the disaffected of his age for a new order of life. The only mandatory article of faith is the belief that the qualities of his personality can somehow become the values of their society. The unhappy few who were madly for Adlai saw in their hero all the elements of compassion, intelligence, and wit which a generation of official liberalism had failed to secure. Twenty-six million Americans knew in their hearts that Goldwater would infuse his own virtues of individualism, morality, and simplicity into the social fabric. Disconfirmation of the prophetic vision by electoral defeat served only to strengthen the faith and spur the efforts of the believers. Stevensonism's wildest expression was in the galleries of the 1960 Democratic convention. The biggest batch of bumper-stickers for Barry was affixed after the rout of November 1964. Stevenson Democrats swarmed into Washington with John Kennedy (himself the object of only a posthumous cult) and made much of the New Frontier in the image of their old guru. The Goldwaterites did the same for the Reagan campaign in California.

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Now Stevenson is gone and Goldwater forgotten, and the hero who has succeeded them is Senator Robert Francis Kennedy. By luck and pluck he has become the last, best hope of the Sixties and the first of the Seventies. The luck is his family, his fortune, and the assassin (or assassins) of Dallas. The pluck involves the development of a style and a rhetoric compounding some of the more attractive aspects of Bob Dylan and Fidel Castro: tousled hair, plaintive croon, underdoggedness, undefined revolutionism. His special charm is for those temporarily or permanently out of power; they sense that he is, either directly or metaphorically, their ticket to the top. They are more than willing to overlook his shortcomings; they invent virtues and powers for him quite beyond the possibilities of natural endowment. His past is rationalized into a prologue for greatness, and his future is divined as its realization.

It is neither dishonourable nor impolitic to ask upon what meat our Caesars feed but, as Ralph de Toledano will see, it is useless. Cult-heroes cannot be destroyed by looking at their records or exposing their mistakes. Everybody knows that Robert Kennedy was soft on McCarthy and vicious to Hoffa, that he plays rough in touch football and tough in election campaigns, that his father is a scoundrel and his social life a three-ring circus. But those who believe in him don't much care; they apologize for his faults and anticipate his perfection. They see his ruthlessness as pragmatism, his sentimentality as humanism, his single-mindedness as dedication.

Mr de Toledano took the precaution of avoiding all contact with the subject of his biography. He talked with no one in Kennedy's entourage, and if he saw the Senator it was from the Senate gallery or on T V. He was wise, be-

cause proximity to Kennedy easily confuses the objective researcher. To think the worst of Kennedy, as the author was determined to do, it is better to stick to old newspaper clippings and secondary sources in remaindered books. To be sure, there are dangers in such a method: errors will be repeated and distortions will be magnified. The author has escaped neither pitfall. He gets names wrong, characters confused, and incidents tangled. He takes at face value every critic's estimate of Kennedy's political behaviour and fails to make the slightest distinction between attacks from the Right or Left, from Republican opponents, personal enemies, or quarrelling colleagues. But by keeping his distance, De Toledano is at least saved the trouble of sorting out his prejudices from contradictory first-hand impressions.

Anyone who has spent even a few minutes with Kennedy knows how he can get under the skin – by a word or the omission of it, by a glance or the diversion of it. Those who must deal critically with Kennedy *should* stay as far from him as possible or, alternatively, tie themselves like Odysseus to a mast of opposing politics and sympathies if they must listen to his songs. For he gives an impression utterly at odds with the one taken from the clippings. He is charming and tender, not brutal and rough; he is spontaneous, not scheming; witty, not humourless; self-critical, not cocky. More than the other ninety-nine senators and as much as any public official, he abjures the easy political response, the hypocritical canned answer to serious questions. He is the only non-Rotarian in the club, the one who tells it like it is: as they all say, he is 'one of us'.

What all that has to do with Kennedy's promise as a political leader is quite another matter, and a very important one to consider, but De Toledano manages to miss it. He is too busy trying to document the hero's vices. What

happens, finally, is that he secures them as virtues. He may not succeed in making Kennedy lovable (as one reviewer suggested), but he does confirm the appeal of those facets of his personality around which the cult has grown. At one point, De Toledano tries to make the case for Kennedy's over-weening political expediency. The example is his 'softness' to Walter Reuther – a political ally – in contrast to his attacks on Hoffa. But when the record of Kennedy's confrontation with Reuther (at Senate labour hearings) shows quite the opposite, De Toledano interprets it as just another instance of ruthlessness:

Bobby's brother was strenuously preparing for the 1960 campaign and engaged in negotiations with the A F L - C I O for its endorsement. But when Walter Reuther was on the stand, Bobby's pugnacity, and his need to appear impartial, triumphed over his diplomacy.

The whole book is filled with the peculiar illogic of invective. When Kennedy comes down hard on an issue, it is an irrational instinct for the jugular. When he is temperate, there is a political motive to be found. When he is friendly to McCarthyism, he is merely obedient to his reactionary father; when he is hostile, he is courting the liberals. When he says something anti-communistic, he is fashionable; when he doesn't, he is treacherous. When Jack Kennedy acts laudably, Bobby is opposed; when Jack acts despicably, it's Bobby's fault. The finished portrait of Kennedy is no better than a Peking wall poster – a series of broad brush strokes superimposed on a surface of newspapers which may make interesting reading in themselves, but have no organic connexion with the intended message.

De Toledano's depreciation is useless in the same way that the liberal appreciations fail to make sense of the Kennedy phenomenon. They both assume that Kennedy's

personality is the substance of his politics, that a putative Kennedy Administration will institutionalize all the characteristics which one finds so appealing and the other so appalling. De Toledano translates Kennedy's personal traits into a ruthless, repressive socialistic society run by labour leaders, Negroes, and other dubious characters, each one trying to push the other into a swimming pool. Some older, schmaltzier liberals share his description of Kennedy, but fear that the new society would *not* be socialistic. Anti-Johnson Democrats deduce from Kennedy's fondness for peaceful change and economic development and foresee a state free from imperialism. Moderate civil rights leaders watch him wander through Brooklyn and Mississippi and fantasize an end to racism and exploitation. The near-New Left and the half-hippies hope that somehow Kennedy can create a world of love and pot and participation.

History and social analysis suggest that the outcome would be like none of the above. Whatever his hang-ups and his moods, Kennedy's politics are determined by the same perceptions which have produced Lyndon Johnson and George Romney, and in the long run his Administration would have much the same effect as theirs. There is no way of knowing whether Kennedy will continue to be a cult-hero, much less whether he will become a candidate for the Presidency. There are too many variables, which are best left to the newspaper columnists to pick over in the next five years. But, at this point, there is an assumption of popularity and eventual candidacy on the part of the political commentators, Kennedy and his staff, and a large population of demoralized and frustrated voters waiting for the coming of the once and future Kennedy.

So, as the future Kennedy moves to a position of poli-

tical power and responsibility, the latitude he allows himself decreases. He may or may not predicate his actions on a cold assessment of political reward; but that is not the point. He has to deliver, he has to show his effect, and he has to keep winning. Because he cannot think of doing that outside political convention, he must become increasingly conventional.

At first, Kennedy appeared to be on the outer margins of the 'system', poised for a swing beyond, into a position of attack. He exhibited a certain identification with the insurgents of this world: the grape-pickers in California, the Negro political movement in Mississippi, the rebels of Santo Domingo, the blacks in South Africa – even the Viet Cong, whom he thought entitled to the blood of his countrymen. It was not entirely clear how far that identification went; Kennedy always had an inexplicit appreciation for the poignant, the powerful, and the talented. But his support remained primarily moral. He was no insurgent himself.

But whatever swing has come has been inward, toward traditional methods of dealing with social problems. Kennedy supported the grape-pickers' merger into the AFL-CIO, which may have been helpful to their strike, but which surely limited their capacity to attack political and economic institutions beyond immediate objectives. He made television commercials for Rep. Jeffery Cohelan to use in his Democratic primary fight against the peace-and-civil-rights campaign of Robert Scheer in California. He helped raise funds for the Young Democrats in Mississippi, an élitist, 'moderate' grouping allied with the national Democratic Administration and opposed to the politics of the Freedom Democrats. He chided critics of CIA's activities by reminding them of the complexities of international affairs.

Kennedy's interest in foreign policy waxes and wanes with the phases of some private moon which he alone observes. Perhaps his cult, and not his own behaviour, is responsible for the incredible fuss when he goes abroad – to Latin America and Africa last year, to Europe recently. But in spite of the returns in newspaper column inches, they seem to be more trouble than they are worth. Back home, he delivers occasional speeches on Latin America which describe in fine detail the malignancy of the established order, the misery of the poor, and the failure of US policy. But he makes no assault on the root causes of that failure – the manipulation of US corporate interests and the habit of military support. He saves his complaints for the examples of obvious breakdown. One can look in vain in his speeches for a convincing critique of the sources of imperialism, although it is clear that he would like to clean it up a bit. The same is true for his treatment of South Africa. Kennedy's visit there last year gave heart to both internal and external opponents of *apartheid*, and he seemed to understand the depressing realities of resistance. But there his understanding stopped; never a mention of Charles Engelhard nor of the Chase Manhattan Bank, nor a recommendation that the US withdraw support from the South African régime.

Most perplexing, because most tantalizing, has been his position on the war in Vietnam. In February 1966 he proposed acceptance of the National Liberation Front's role in any Vietnamese settlement, then backed away when questioned sharply, and remained silent (or contrite?) for a year. His second annual Vietnam address, presented to an expectant Senate this year on March 2, criticized the President for a reluctance to negotiate with Hanoi, and included a moving account of the horrors of war. It was a fine attempt to legitimize the moral issues, which hard-

nosed politicians would like to ignore. Kennedy's staff claims the second speech went further against official policy than did the first, but to many listeners it seemed somewhat less of a break. In any case, it came at least two weeks too late to have any specific effect on negotiations for de-escalation. Kennedy knows now that he waited too long; he confided recently that the Administration fooled him into thinking that real progress toward peace talks was being made, and that a critical speech might ruin their chances of success.

What is maddening is that Kennedy *always* appears to know better. Staughton Lynd and Tom Hayden emerged from a lengthy interview (which Kennedy requested) believing that he understood the basic error of the Administration's policy: that the refusal to entertain the possibility of a unified, Communist-controlled Vietnam only prolonged the war. 'We're in the same ballpark,' Kennedy told the two visitors as they left his East River apartment. But that was not the way it came out on the floor of the Senate. Some weeks later, after General Westmoreland's bullying visit to the mainland, Kennedy indicated to friends that he thought the war would soon get much worse, that there would be new escalation, and that the dangers were enormous. He thereupon made a few mildly critical comments about Administration policy in the course of an exchange among 'doves' after the wide-ranging assault by Senator George McGovern. But even then Kennedy could not see himself risking his place inside the system to lead the attack — the only attack which might mobilize effective opposition to the war in the foreseeable present.

It should hardly be surprising that Kennedy acts like a normal politician. There is nothing in his background,

his performance, or his prospects which suggests that he behave otherwise. He may be impulsive and keen on the issues, but he sees them with the eyes of a traditional political operator. It is not necessary to suppose that he feeds every alternative into some Lou Harris poll or a computer to see which one will get him the most number of votes for some office in some future election. He goes out of his way to talk with poor sharecroppers in the Mississippi Delta, or attacks Sam Yorty in a Senate hearing, or supports legislative reapportionment, because he is genuinely concerned. Most of his advisers (outside his dovish office staff) warned him of the negative political consequences of this year's Vietnam speech; Ted Sorensen, for one, was adamantly opposed. But Kennedy went ahead, because he did not like the war nor the way the President was conducting it. To Kennedy cultists, those qualities of spontaneity and honesty are absolute virtues, and even to critical observers there is something rare and refreshing in the way he swings around the issues. But it is all perfectly safe. His impulses never take him beyond the limits of accepted behaviour. He would not join a peace march in Central Park nor withdraw his account from a bank supporting the South African economy nor make a TV spot for a peacenik candidate against a good Democrat. Nor will he fail to support the Johnson-Humphrey ticket for re-election in 1968. He can conceive of doing no less.

All that may be obvious to the politically sophisticated, but the Kennedy cult is based on the hope, if not the tenet, that the man can operate without as well as within the boundaries of the system, that he can lead a revolution of attrition against the dominant institutions of the society. The myth will die hard. It is based on the shaky assumptions of pluralism: that the structure of

American life is open enough and democratic enough to allow for whatever reforms are necessary, if only a formula for gathering political power can be found.

Arthur Schlesinger, Jr, a peripatetic theoretician in Kennedy's Lyceum, appears to have arrived at such a formula. In an article in the April *Progressive*, he restates his argument that Americans have most of the things they need for the good life. What they want now is quality control. The new 'qualitative' issues replace the old 'quantitative' ones. Instead of 'a job, a suit of clothing, three meals a day, a roof over one's head, and a measure of security for old age,' people now are concerned with 'civil rights, civil liberties, education, urban planning, the state of the arts and the beauty of the environment . . . and, in addition, foreign policy'. These issues, he concludes,

are no longer social and economic so much as they are cultural and moral. It is no longer the common man against the economic royalist or the worker against the boss so much as it is the rational against the indignant, the tolerant against the bigoted, the planner against the spoiler, the humanist against the materialist, the educated against the uneducated, the young against the old.

To deal with them, Schlesinger would weld a new coalition of urban innovators (Cavanaghs instead of Daleys), the unorganized (or Reuther-organized) poor, the newly diplomated middle class, the remaining progressive ethnic groups, the churches – 'and the most vital group of all, the youth.' Discarded are the regressive elements of the old New Deal coalition – the satisfied labour unions, the grasping lower-middle class, and the backlashing minorities. To lead the new forces must be a leader 'sufficiently free, cool, and brave, to relate to the young and recover

their allegiance for American society.' Schlesinger need be no more specific.

Despite the echoes of Dylan and Marcuse, Fannie Lou Hamer and Erik Erikson in Kennedy's speeches, Schlesinger's formulation indicates the basis and the limits of the new Kennedy politics. It can all be seen in Kennedy's project in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. In January 1966, Kennedy presented a series of speeches on urban problems which included several policy suggestions for community development, but no specific plans for action. A few weeks later, he began to hear complaints from Negroes in Bedford-Stuyvesant about the lack of follow-up. Kennedy's New York staff men went to work seeing what might be done, and by the end of the year they had developed a 'total programme' for employment, education, community organization, social services, and economic growth such as Kennedy outlined in the second of his addresses. A committee of influential businessmen – Thomas Watson of I B M, William Paley of C B S, financiers Douglas Dillon and André Meyer – was established as a development corporation. A local organization of the poor was set up to 'govern' the project. City and state officials were asked to help, and proposals for federal aid (including financing from a Labor Department programme which Kennedy pushed through Congress last year) were drawn. Before long, however, the poor people's organization developed a malfunction. It was being controlled by the traditional manipulators in the community. The Kennedy men in New York had not known how to reach the under-class, but when they saw that the council was making no impact in the area, they abandoned it and established a new, *poorer* people's organization, as a rival. The Citizens' Crusade Against Poverty, a liberal coalition of community action organiza-

tions set up by Walter Reuther, was called in to get the poor moving. The Astor fortune was requisitioned to build 'superblocks' in the slum.

The Bedford-Stuyvesant project is almost too good a test of Kennedy's ideas and the direction he intends to go. It is relatively small and self-contained. There is no strong existing governmental organization, nor local leadership with deep roots. The typical problems of urban slums are acute. Kennedy can marshal considerable political power in New York to effect change, and his staff is rather immodestly eager to assume executive functions to relieve the boredom of legislative life. Kennedy, too, is restless under the restrictions of the senatorial role. The operation in Brooklyn amounts to a kind of mini-Administration, until the real thing comes along.

But it is far too early to tell whether Kennedy's plan for Bedford-Stuyvesant will develop the new forms of community government, and achieve the physical and social rehabilitation its backers envisage. The basic scheme suggests that something less than radical reconstruction will result. The Kennedy assumption is the Schlesinger thesis: that the highly motivated poor can work with the corporate élite and the planners with the politicians to produce a 'qualitatively' Greater Society. It does not, however, seem likely. The cultural and moral issues are still inextricably bound up with the social and economic ones. Air pollution may be an aspect of the quality of life, but all the technological adjustment in the world will not reduce the smog one particle if economic pressure cannot be applied against the polluting industries. Urban planning is still a political problem; there is no end to the plans, and no end to the political obstacles in the way of their execution either. Banks and factories

for the slums might be nice, but something much more profound – ‘more social and economic’ in the sense that Schlesinger’s formula rejects – has to be done to bring the poor out of the culture of poverty. Kennedy’s men in Brooklyn will find that the poor and the middle class do not share a universe of interests. In trying to improve education, for example, they will see that new buildings and bright teachers and modern curricula make little difference in learning among the poor. As the parents of East Harlem’s I S-201 have been trying to say for a year now, changes in educational quality will not come until the community gains new measures of power – money, and status, and social effect. That process comes through political struggle; it will not be freely given by businessmen or social workers, much less by senators or mayors or directors of human resources. For the act of *taking* power is the condition of *being* powerful.

At best, the Bedford-Stuyvesant plan seems to be an attempt to apply the principles of American development aid overseas to an ‘underdeveloped’ community at home. The idea of local counter-insurgency obviously appeals to Kennedy. Riot control is the first responsibility of the modern Prince. But there is no assurance that the local effort will have any more success than the foreign one has had. Aid programmes have largely failed because of an inability to arrange a redistribution of power in the ‘target’ countries. US money and technical assistance is monopolized by the élites, who use it to tighten their grip on the underclasses. The same has been true of the anti-poverty programme in this country; city machines and welfare bureaucracies have been the major beneficiaries of the money and the effort expended so far.

Still, it is very difficult to criticize the Kennedy pro-

ject in Brooklyn, as it is to bad-mouth his efforts and exercises in other fields. There is precious little in the country that is any better. Only a handful of senators criticize the war, few even *talk* about Latin America, and in any event Kennedy is so much brighter and more appealing personally than any of them. But it may be a serious mistake to consider what Kennedy is doing – in Bedford-Stuyvesant as elsewhere – a healthy 'first step' toward significant change. For Kennedy would impose his own kind of élitist reform before any independent forms of social reconstruction could begin.

To realign US foreign policy, there must be basic changes in the operation of the corporatist system, so that its decision-makers no longer perceive their interests to lie in destroying the independence of other countries. Along with those changes, there would have to be drastic revisions in military strategy and a dismantling of the defence establishment. No president elected within the normal political procedures by the constituencies that now exist could achieve that. But Kennedy would tend to strengthen, not weaken, the structure of imperialism: by encouraging American overseas corporations to behave liberally, to allow foreign governments to exert superficial control over corporate operations, and to keep cool when political currents seem to threaten their interests. At the same time, Kennedy would encourage the development of a large counter-insurgency capability (as begun by his brother) to put down the really serious threats.

At home, Kennedy would be drawn to analogous illusions of reform. Larger governmental units might be decentralized to bring policy-making 'closer to the people', while the old power relationships are maintained. It would always be necessary to control independent political constituencies, whether they are Freedom Democrats

in the South or Liberation Parties in the ghettos or unaffiliated labour insurgencies on the farms. The job of political leaders is to force such groups into coalitions which they already manipulate: the national Democratic Party, the city machines, the big labour unions.

A Kennedy Administration would try to implement the Schlesinger formula on a grand scale. There is a strong suggestion in that thesis that there is a 'crisis' in the order akin to the failure of American institutions in the years before the New Deal, which Schlesinger has chronicled so brilliantly. The New Deal saved the order then by appearing to reform it. If things are really falling apart now, if the war and the Negro revolt and the alienation of the suburban middle class and the loss of 'allegiance' of the young is as serious as Schlesinger suspects, Kennedy may indeed be the only leader able to maintain the order, however readjusted it may have to be internally. Certainly the Bedford-Stuyvesant coalition – corporation heads, liberal intellectuals, welfare politicians, progressive unionists, militant Negroes, and eager young volunteers – offers the best hope to keep the centre holding. But it is absurd to suppose that the social finagling will produce essential change. The Schlesinger doctrine invests the 'free, cool, and brave' leader with powers he cannot logically have. The kind of top-down reforms he is capable of will result *only* in the superficial readjustments that can buy off the cutting edge of resistance. To do more requires the kind of dislocation and reconstruction of underlying relationships which can only come from a new politics, based on movement and conflict, not coalition and consensus. It is not Kennedy's fault that he can do no other; it is his situation.

For those who cannot believe in the essential efficacy of 'cultural and moral' (or technical and legislative) solu-

tions to basic social and economic problems, the next few years will present a series of painful choices. The Kennedy camp will gather much of the brightest, most energetic, most effective talent in the country. Some may join up in full agreement with the prospects as they now appear; others may try, as Robert Scheer recommended in a recent *Ramparts* profile of Kennedy, to 'up the ante', to make Kennedy's reforms a little more broad than they might otherwise be. Only a few will remain outside. Only a handful will continue to build independent constituencies – of intellectuals, of the poor, of the Negro under-class. It is far from clear what the outsiders will accomplish. But in the end Kennedy will not remake the society, either by his personality or with his programmes, and we will have need again of a saving remnant.

The Old Politics

Both McCarthy and Robert Kennedy decided to play the Old Politics game in the 1968 campaign. The McCarthy movement turned into an abbreviated version of the regular Democratic Party electoral formula: the difference was that a slightly different élite occupied the leadership positions. The Kennedy campaign was a regular version of the regular formula; *his* difference was that he had enough appeal to win, or come close. The Johnson-Humphrey-Nixon-Rockefeller axis proved dreary beyond belief.

The McCarthy Campaign

Ramparts March 1968

History is full of last chances, lost opportunities and unperceived possibilities. The history of political liberalism in America for the past twenty years is composed of very little else. Now, in the winter of 1968, when the country is practically *in extremis*, the keepers of that liberal heritage have found themselves confronted by the severest – and the final – test of their legitimacy. There is no way within the system to save the system except by the presentation of a practicable, *possible* political alternative to the present impossible choices.

For a year or more, liberal activists have been fussing about with one project or another, searching for a pool of political energy and a way to exploit it. There were local 'moderate' peace candidates, Vietnam Summer, the National Conference for New Politics, a King-Spock ticket, a Hatfield boom and a Kennedy Restoration. Not all were real, and those that were led to nothing or else spun off their radical components into discrete, tangential orbits. Finally, after all that trying, the very core of the liberal tradition has brought forth its candidate for the last, best hope of America.

He is, of course, Eugene J. McCarthy, and now it appears that he is no hope after all. McCarthy is a sympathetic, intelligent man, sincerely rational and profoundly cynical. If politics were nothing more than a show of sensibility, McCarthy would be counted a success; there is a touch of the (minor) poet that conceals the corruption and compromise of his role. But of the uses

of power he knows little, and cares less. His campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination has had its occasional moments of exuberance, but mostly it has been flat, tasteless and strangely out of context with the crisis of its time.

'I don't know whether it will be political suicide,' McCarthy joked at his press conference on the day when, at the end of November, he announced his candidacy. 'It will probably be more like an execution.' All along, the message of his campaign has been its hopelessness, and McCarthy seems to derive a certain reassurance from his lack of effect. 'It's nonsense to set my mind on the presidency,' he said some weeks later in his Senate office, as he sunk into a dark, fragrant leather chair. 'The challenge on the issue – that's the important thing.' In the windmill-tilting racket, the tilt is all; no one wants – or expects – the vanes to stop. 'I'm testing the system,' McCarthy concluded softly, and then nodded his head to acknowledge that he had no doubt that the system would be found wanting.

What lies beyond the rhetoric of challenge in McCarthy's mind is still obscure. In the campaign legend, the germ of the idea was planted by his daughter, Mary, who from the margins of Radcliffe radicalism chided her father for not making good on his liberal ideals. Father had indeed been cautious. In private he worried about the war, but in public he said little, and in Congress he lined up with the Democratic leadership more often than not. He had voted for the Tonkin Resolution, extension of the draft and the various war appropriations. Suddenly he grew uneasy. 'If you've been around for 30 years passing moral judgements on politics and society, you've got to take a stand,' he said one morning a few weeks ago. 'You can't go waving your wooden spoon forever.'

Once motivated, McCarthy began sniffing out the dank places of liberal politics for possible sources of support. He found encouragement on the (slightly) left wing of ADA, where anti-war sentiment was strong. The half-dozen or so Democratic congressmen who have arranged themselves in noble but futile coalition ('the Sisyphus Club') were pleased. He could count on most of SANE, the legions of the California Democratic Council and the New York Reform Democratic clubs. He had seen the ads for dissident and concerned Democrats in the usual liberal periodicals, and he assumed that most of them, whoever they were, would welcome a 'peace' candidacy, as long as the candidate were over thirty and shaved regularly. Most of the political preparation had been done by the National Liberation Front and the North Vietnamese: they had made anti-war politics possible in America by winning the war in Vietnam. And the liberal space had been stretched by the radical war protest movements, which had been at work all during the time McCarthy had been agonizing over the national honour and keeping his mouth shut in the Capitol.

McCarthy declared his intentions in a press conference in the Senate caucus room (where John Kennedy had done the same thing eight years earlier), then flew to Chicago where the Concerned Democrats were conveniently assembled for endorsement of his candidacy. The affair had been arranged by Allard K. Lowenstein, who at the age of forty was in the process of casting off his role as the oldest student leader in America in exchange for a more adult profession. Lowenstein has made a career of checkered careers. He was president of the National Student Association shortly before the CIA took over, and remained chief kibbitzer in the NSA old-boys network. In other incarnations, Lowenstein was

a dorm. counsellor and teacher at Stanford (he left amid charges that he was turning students on to political activism), an important organizer of the 1964 Mississippi Summer Project (he turned against SNCC for its radicalism in midsummer), an aspirant to the Reform Democratic designation in a New York congressional primary, an aide to Hubert Humphrey, a publicist for South-West African independence and a vice president of Americans for Democratic Action.

Lowenstein saw his political future in the Kennedy camp, but his entreaties to Bobby to run for the presidency in 1968 had been unavailing. In September, Lowenstein made a determined effort to talk Kennedy into the campaign, and when it failed, he reconciled himself to supporting a lesser figure. By the time of the Chicago conference, McCarthy was the only possibility, but Lowenstein was not completely happy. McCarthy, he thought, was pitched in too low a key for a 'peace movement' campaign. More than that, the senator's position on Vietnam – stop the bombing, withdraw to enclaves and try to negotiate – was considerably behind that of his most militant supporters. Lowenstein found the 500 Chicago delegates restless, bored and a little disappointed even in anticipation of McCarthy's appearance; whereupon he proceeded to deliver an enormously exciting speech to the convention, to the accompaniment of a brass band's rendition of 'Hello, Dolly'. McCarthy waited in the wings, 'kicking paper cups', someone said. Lowenstein soared higher and higher. 'He didn't just warm up the crowd,' a McCarthy campaigner said later, 'he overheated it.'

It was more than a letdown when McCarthy finally gained control of the rostrum. His own speech was dry and dull, and the audience response was in the same vein. It was there that the image of McCarthy as a cool fish was

born, and it haunts the campaign to this day. Lowenstein's tentative relationship with the campaign also appears to date from the Chicago speech, although McCarthy is at a loss to explain why. 'I keep asking Al, "What do you want to do?"' McCarthy complained recently, 'and he won't exactly tell me. I guess he wants to run in the Senate primary in New York. I don't know.'

Even with a more felicitous beginning, McCarthy's relationship with Lowenstein held small promise of success. Like many bright men, McCarthy likes to surround himself with aides who are distinctly duller. There are a few outsiders with whom he talks on political subjects and the great issues of the day – Joseph Rauh, Jr of A D A, Gilbert Harrison of the *New Republic*, Robert McAfee Brown, the Stanford theologian, and some of the more clever journalists around the country – but with a few exceptions, his office and campaign staffs are inexperienced or worse. His campaign manager, former CBS News Director Blair Clark, is understanding and resourceful, but his only campaign experience was as press director of the Harriman-for-President Committee in 1952. McCarthy's first press man, Tom Page of the Peace Corps public affairs office, was shunted into an eddy of the campaign after a few weeks out front. The rest of the crew of teeny-bopper liberals is eager enough, but the Washington office has something of the atmosphere of a student council election headquarters.

By early February, Lowenstein's role in the campaign was unclear, even to the McCarthy staff. There were stories that he was out, then in, then half-out or half-in. In the back of his mind, Lowenstein was still hoping, if not working, for a Bobby miracle. On 31 January – the day after Kennedy made another in his series of dis-

avowals of candidacy – Lowenstein flew to Washington to tell Bobby how sorry he was.

Al Lowenstein is not alone in his sorrow. Much of what is left of the liberal community in America was waiting for the Camelot plot to fulfil itself, and the once and future Kennedy to reappear. As Kennedy later told Lowenstein, however, he simply could not put the thing together – not yet, at any rate. He felt that Johnson could manipulate opinion and demand Democratic loyalty with sufficient strength to stop any attempt at an organized dump.

In their own separate ways, the Kennedy forces and the McCarthy minions were acting in response to the same constellation of political circumstances: the break-up of the Democratic coalition, the disenfranchisement of the remaining liberals and the fluidity of the general political scene. Intuitively, the McCarthy men began to emulate the vintage 1948 model for the reorganization of the liberal bloc. In the original version, intellectuals and trade unionists formed the A D A and secured control of major labour groups, local political parties and private parapolitical organizations. To legitimize their claims as well as to rid themselves of their fiercest rivals, the liberals cleansed existing organizations of all radical elements, and when that was not possible, they formed parallel groups that excluded the unwashed left. A D A countered the Progressive Party and supported Truman over Henry Wallace; the Liberal Party in New York was aimed against Vito Marcantonio's American Labor Party. In Minnesota, Hubert Humphrey and Orville Freeman, with a little help from their friends (like Eugene McCarthy), drove the Reds out of the Democrat-Farmer-Labor Party. Walter Reuther did the same in the C I O.

One of McCarthy's younger campaign workers – who must have been in grammar school when all of that took place – said last month that it was his hope that McCarthy would build an 'enclave' within the Democratic Party as a home for liberals and a launching place for social change. That was the line in the old days. The liberals were safe and secure as long as they could translate the demands of their constituencies into benefits from a Democratic Administration.

In fact, the liberal leaders were simply entrepreneurs of the system. They held title to a base of union members, intellectuals, Negroes, ethnic minorities, young professionals and ex-radicals in wide assortment. If all went well, they could gather up bloc votes, money, campaign work and general support to offer the party politicians. In exchange, they were given labour legislation, peace and civil liberties, civil rights, welfare and a bagful of reforms to deliver to the folks at the grass roots.

The power brokerage game has a vocabulary of humanitarian virtue and popular idealism, but it is played as rough as machine politics or wheeler-dealer business. Explicit bargains involving the lives and hopes of millions of people are struck in Capitol Hill offices and Washington lunch clubs; for example, Roy Wilkins and Walter Reuther slugged it out in a day-long battle in the White House in 1963 to see who would lead the officially-sponsored civil rights 'movement' (President Kennedy gave Wilkins the job). Implicit deals are arranged more subtly, in the regions of men's minds: labour leaders, for instance, understand that they must cut the edge of militancy in their unions if they are to be welcome in Administration councils. The status of the brokers depends on how smoothly they can keep the system flowing.

During the Eisenhower years, the middlemen – Joe

Rauh, Reuther, Schlesinger, Humphrey, and the rest – clung to their positions on the promise that the Democrats would be back in power before long and the goods would roll once more. For recreation, they formulated ideologies to rationalize their own interests and confirm the historical mission of the system they served. The theories were elaborate: ‘end of ideology’, anti-communism, neo-Keynesianism. With Kennedy’s election, the liberals achieved their finest, if briefest, hour. Many of the top men came straight into the Administration; the others could buzz in and out as they pleased.

But the liberal perceptions of even the most steadfast are warped by the experience of power. The most obvious – and most pathetic – example was Adlai Stevenson; his eloquence proved equally appropriate to lies as it once was to truth. There was a lot of selling out, as there always is, and the great movements for change never seemed to be launched from the enclaves. But by the time of the assassination – and for a year afterwards – the entrepreneurial system was working as well as it ever could.

The war and its domestic consequences changed all of that. The intellectuals dropped out first, then the Negroes, the ethnic minorities and the young professionals. George Meany discovered that he needed no middlemen to represent his interests to the power structure. He was *in* it. Fresh disasters befell the Administration – the black uprisings, tight money, the backlash; all, in their own ways, reinforced the total effect of disintegration. After a while there was no role for the middlemen; they had no base to trade and no goods to deliver. And the legitimacy that they had won with anti-

communism was destroyed by the exposure of their complicity with the C I A establishment.

It may not have been in McCarthy's mind, but it must have been in his guts to recreate the 1948 scene. This time the peace movement would be the base of support, the anti-war intellectuals would supply the rhetoric and the Negroes and student activists would provide the necessary energy. Like the communists before, the most radical elements would be purged. It was a nice idea, but divorced from real politics. The peace movement is not the International Ladies Garment Workers Union; it is not organized or structured nor does it have much potential in those directions. Few whites, least of all the McCarthy liberals, can talk with the ghetto Negroes. On the same hand, the liberals can *only* talk to the white radicals but there is no guarantee that they will listen. Most of all, McCarthy could not hope to deliver the necessary pay-off – an end to the war – from the Democratic Administration.

Try as he might, McCarthy has not been able to get all or even most of the liberal community on his side. There are good political managers around in profusion these days, and many of them call themselves liberals. But the best of them are in the Kennedy camp, and they fancy that they have a better sense of power than the 'mushy' types with McCarthy. Although there is much overlapping and the categories themselves are vague, it is clear that the 'power' liberals have no confidence in the significance of a McCarthy campaign. The Kennedy men have been interested in reorganizing Democratic politics too, but they put little stock in the peace movement as their agent. Rather, they favour the 'urban' route; the angry and oppressed masses in the cities are a tougher force than the suburban SANE-niks. The Kennedys don't

forget their Marxism. Bobby Kennedy thinks his project in Bedford-Stuyvesant points the way to the politicalization of the slums, and the Kennedy Institute academics are developing the techniques and the ideologies to support the effort. The urbanists may be as unreal as the peace-niks, but they are concentrating on their own plan.

Despite the counter-indicative arguments and evidence, McCarthy cannot help but identify himself and his campaign with the 'respectable' peace constituency. It is a comfortable, middle-class, white and well-educated family. They believe that they are the only effective political agents in the land; they have not yet learned the truth of their own powerlessness. Like his people, McCarthy is a gentle élitist, with that mixture of good intentions, self-delusion and arrogance common to the breed. His own history is the perfect scenario for the Liberal's Progress.

McCarthy's first job was in the 'intelligence community' as a War Department spook during World War II. He taught sociology at a Catholic college in St Paul, then began dabbling in Democrat-Farmer-Labor politics, on the Humphrey side. He helped Humphrey purge radicals from the DFL, and was rewarded with a congressional nomination in 1948. In those days, McCarthy seemed more aggressive than he is now. He played the *old* McCarthyist game on both sides of the street, speaking out against the witch hunts and then, in a sense, legitimizing them. He bitterly attacked Joe McCarthy (the two once debated on the air) for threatening the civil liberties of non-communists, and he offered a successful amendment to a security bill in Congress which gave the right of appeal to civil servants who had been fired for suspected subversion. But in 1954 he supported the 'Humphrey Bill' outlawing the Communist Party. And he later said: 'It seems clear enough that the Com-

munist Party gives lip service to freedom only to exploit and abuse it.'

In the mid-fifties, it was perfectly acceptable for a liberal politician to take an imperialist line on foreign policy. The following statements have an authentic Dullesian ring: 'The US must undertake to preserve Western civilization and the peoples who value it ... [and] guard and protect our lifelines to vital materials and necessary supplies of oil, tin, manganese, uranium, etc ... preserve our national honour ... and raise the economic and cultural level of peoples of other civilizations and thus promote the cause of justice and world peace.

'... It is to the interest of the United States to protect non-communist countries against communist combination, even to the point of using American troops under certain conditions.'

It was not Dulles, but McCarthy who said all that (the first statement in 1951, the second in 1954). The point is not that McCarthy should be hung on his words of fifteen years ago. He is aware of the inconsistencies, and in his campaign speeches is careful to say that the nature of international communism has changed, and that the US response should now change with it. In a real way, however, liberals of the Cold War period laid the foundation for today's anti-communist imperialism. They never challenged the whole framework of ideology, which as it turned out was of their own construction. In theory, they said, it was perfectly all right to wage the world counter-revolution, if the consequences were not too disagreeable. Naturally, those in power, whose interests are really at stake in foreign policy, will accept the premise and feel free to disregard the qualification. The conception of America's role in world politics which McCarthy formu-

lated in 1951 led almost inevitably to John Kennedy's policy of counter-insurgency in 1961, and from there to the Cuban missile crisis and, at the end, to the genocidal war in Vietnam. Unresponsive now to demands of the power centres, McCarthy can easily see the necessity for the liquidation of a particular imperialist adventure. But it is not hard to imagine what line he would take if he were in the seat now occupied by his soul brother, Hubert Humphrey.

In Congress, McCarthy voted for most of the standard liberal programmes, and in 1957 he helped organize the Democratic Study Group in the House (originally called 'McCarthy's Marauders') to consolidate the attack. The DSG became the major instrument of congressional liberals during that period of feverish political jockeying in preparation for their roles in the New Frontier. McCarthy worked his way up into the ranks of the Ways and Means Committee, and quickly discovered the political and social benefits that its membership conferred.

When McCarthy moved to the Senate in 1959 he slid easily into the Finance Committee and settled down to a casual life in that most boring of all parliamentary bodies. The Finance Committee was where it was at, and it was the custom of members to trade favours for political support, senatorial status, and – in the case of the more venal types – campaign funds and personal 'contributions'. McCarthy never stooped to venality (he is, unfortunately, the poorest of the current presidential candidates), but he was not above playing the bill-swapping game or using his influence within the Committee for little political gambits. It was all harmless enough. He voted for oil depletion allowances in 1964 and has generally been con-

sidered a friend of the oil and gas industries, with only a few regrets – mostly on the Senate floor where they are for public consumption, and not in committee, where they count. He justifies his oil votes for the liberal audience by arguing that depletion allowances have been ‘built into the structure of the industry, its price structure and capitalization’. Major reduction in the allowances would be harmful to the country’s economy, he thinks, and so he voted along with Lyndon Johnson, the lobbyists and William Fulbright. To his critics, he gently thumbs his nose: ‘The oil depletion allowance is not really a great liberal issue.’

There were other favours for large corporations and their managers which did not fit McCarthy’s definition of ‘great liberal issues’. In 1962 he tried to kill (unsuccessfully) an Administration proposal to close the loophole on expense account deductions. There was no significant lobby against the measure, and it seemed like a logical step to most of the great liberals. Russell Long, who was soon to become the effective (and then actual) chairman of the Committee, favoured retaining the loophole, under the ‘prudent man theory’. Anything a ‘prudent man’ would deduct from his tax return should be allowed. McCarthy agreed. In reply to criticism on that one, he said scornfully that the Kennedys never gave him the time of day, and he felt no obligation to vote for their little reforms.

McCarthy probably had a few other fishes frying. The schema of the Finance Committee gives the chairman absolute power over tax legislation, and he allows members to promote their pet projects on the implicit promise of favours in return. There are also deals made between the members themselves, both for support of legislation and other political advantages. Not for nothing did Paul

Douglas support the candidacy of Russell Long for Democratic Whip; Douglas came right after Long in seniority on the Committee. McCarthy has seen his small share of special bills through Finance. One of them was for the tax relief of Twin Cities Rapid Transit, a local firm that needed government largesse to make up big deficits in conversion from streetcars to buses. McCarthy got a bill passed for such purposes but President Kennedy vetoed it in 1961; in his veto message he alluded to the shadiness of the company's operation: 'The management converted rapidly ... to complete its fraudulent activity quickly.' Undaunted, McCarthy brought the matter up again in 1962, this time as a veto-proof amendment to a tax bill. In the ensuing Senate floor debate, Douglas attacked McCarthy and Humphrey (who helped his junior colleague from Minnesota): 'Those who have powerful friends on the Senate Finance Committee or are powerful members of [it] can frequently enjoy a better meal at the public table than those to whom the doors are barred.' The amendment passed. Among its most influential supporters was Senator Robert Kerr, the king of the oil industry's bag men.

In sum, it is pretty much small-time stuff, but then McCarthy never has been in the big time. His Senate record is not exactly barren, but he has yet to sponsor a major piece of legislation. He toyed with the Ethics Committee investigation of Tom Dodd, and successfully cut the probe off as it began to get into the meat of the case. He explained afterwards that he could not stomach the hypocrisy of senators who were as guilty as Dodd but were now tormenting him as a scapegoat. He finally voted for censure. McCarthy's biggest moment in the Senate in years came during the last session, when he introduced a resolution creating a congressional watchdog system over

the CIA. But then, out of boredom or peevishness, he let the matter drop in mid-course.

There was a brief moment in 1964 when McCarthy thought he might escape into the executive branch. He hoped that his liberal record, his Catholic devotion, and his trustworthiness on the Finance Committee (not to mention the oil votes) could get him the vice-presidential nomination. After all, McCarthy had done Lyndon Johnson a favour in 1960 by nominating Adlai Stevenson at the Democratic convention. Intended or not, the move had drawn support away from Kennedy and strengthened Johnson's relative position. McCarthy had said that Johnson was his own second choice, after Stevenson.

But Johnson did not reciprocate the favour in 1964. At dawn on the big day at the Atlantic City convention, McCarthy realized that he was being used for dramatic effect, and 'withdrew' from contention with an early-morning telegram to the President and a statement to the press. Johnson was enraged. His stage play called for a walk with McCarthy around the White House lawn before the kiss-off. Now he had to settle for Tom Dodd as a stand-in.

The present presidential campaign offers McCarthy some relief from the monotony of the Senate. Even when an item appears on the calendar that might be used in his campaign he cannot bring himself to take the subway over to the Capitol. For example, he (as well as ninety-four other senators) was not present to vote on the nomination of Clark Clifford for secretary of Defense. He confessed that he did not know the matter was coming up. In any case, he knew that one voice against Clifford would not have meant much (although in his first year in Senate he joined with other liberals to block

Republican President's nomination of Admiral Lewis Strauss as secretary of Commerce).

It is startling to compare McCarthy's pervasive cynicism in congressional politics with the exalted idealism of his campaign. He acts under the assumption that individual acts of political courage make little sense in the Capitol, but proclaims that they mean everything on the stump. At the beginning, McCarthy had hoped that his candidacy could frighten the President into changing his war policy. Perhaps a different campaign might have done just that – one which mobilized large numbers of people for a direct attack on the legitimacy of the Johnson Administration, with the explicit threat of making a massive defection from the Democratic Party in November. But McCarthy refrains from such tactics and remains a good Party man. He usually tells his audiences he would have 'no problem' voting against almost any Republican, except an avowed dove. Unless his most militant advisers have more success in their persuasion than they have had so far, McCarthy will not lead his followers into the Republican camp in the fall.

Even if he could not help defeat Johnson or bring an immediate change in foreign policy, some benefit might come out of the campaign if McCarthy could educate an active group of voters for future political work. To do that, he would have to give them information and help draw the connexions and relationships between forces which the Democratic centre tries to obscure. But McCarthy never even begins to talk about the underlying causes of the war, the fundamental imbalances which produce poverty and support racism, or the real dimensions of the crisis of America's empire. He feels more at home lecturing about the superficial inequities and injustices. Perhaps he underestimates his audiences; they

know the war is wrong and that black people are oppressed. What they want to know is *why*, and what can be done.

At St Anselm's College, in Manchester, New Hampshire, McCarthy gave his typical answer: 'Change will really not come in response to what I have to say. It will come in part, I hope, from that. I suppose it will really not come in response to what you may say or do here in New Hampshire and how you may vote. But I think that, in part, that change can be influenced by what does take place here in New Hampshire in March. And I ask ... that you be aware at least of that share of the burden of citizenship which you carry in the United States, that what you say in some way will be heard, and that what you do – even though it may seem to be unimportant and minimal – will also be noted.'

It is not surprising that a lot of people walked out puzzled. They were not worried about his 'style', which the daily press keeps attacking. Like any sensitive adult, McCarthy disdains the extraverted, arm-grabbing approach to politics. 'People don't want to be shouted at,' he said on opening day of his drive for the New Hampshire primary vote. 'This is a confrontation of issues, not a presentation of a personality.' On the trail, he chats amiably with newsmen and passersby, and although he seems to find it a little tiresome, he presses on. He spends as little time as he has to in campaign appearances; his is the first campaign in recorded history that runs ahead of schedule. At St Anselm's, McCarthy ended his shortish speech with a burst of Stevensonian eloquence ('This need not be an America where ... It can be an America which. . . .') but did not convert the applause this into more lasting effect. He could have done it easily by answering questions or chatting with the students.

townspeople afterwards. But he would not; McCarthy seems embarrassed and awkward with ordinary citizens, and prefers to keep as far away as possible. A little élitism goes a long way on the campaign trail.

But the problem at heart is not McCarthy's inability to thrust a personality on the public. Candidates have overwhelmed voters and still lost elections, and shy men have made revolutions. It is what McCarthy's campaign means that makes the difference. He says he is providing an 'alternative' to the frustration of the protesters, and he is applauded for that effort by both the Establishment press and the frightened liberals. At the end, however, he may be causing more frustration than he relieves. A campaign without a political focus is hopeless from the start.

McCarthy's failure, both personally and politically, is a perfect metaphor for the failure of liberalism in the American sixties. Liberalism is where people are not. In another age, McCarthy's gentle appeals to reason and his touching loyalty to the Democratic Party might have found wide acceptance. Their audience now is distinctly limited.

The importance of the McCarthy campaign lies in its unimportance; its pathos is its unreality. McCarthy sets his political objective as a 'test of the system', and a 'challenge to the war'. These goals are worthy only if the campaign has a reasonable chance of success. But even McCarthy knows that it does not, and the inevitable consequences rob the effort of its essential morality. When the political season is over, and McCarthy disposes of his few votes and minimal support, his cause is likely to be the loser. The peace constituency will be discredited, the liberal leadership will be more easily ignored and the Johnson Administration will be as strong or stronger

than it ever was. In addition, the radical protest movement to change the system from outside will have been injured by the accusations of the McCarthyites whose political interests are now directly opposed to those of the radicals. McCarthy himself may find contentment in the belief that he has committed 'suicide' – the final act of personal morality. But political morality cannot exist outside of political reality; it's not how you play the game but whether you win or lose. To believe you will win and then lose is excusable; to know all the time you will lose is not.

The real victims in all this are the frustrated and alienated people, as McCarthy speaks of them, who trudge through the snow to get a glimpse of the candidate, or stuff envelopes in wretched campaign headquarters on the off-chance that it will do some good. They must believe in the campaign for they have nothing else. They hate the war and they are terrified by the failure of the institutions they once relied on. They will not vote for Johnson, they cannot vote for Bobby Kennedy, they are made physically ill by the sight of Nixon or the thought of Reagan, and they cannot bring themselves to storm the steps of the Pentagon. Their last, best hope is indeed in McCarthy, and now he cannot tell them what his campaign means.

It is small consolation that even he sees his predicament. 'It's worse than I thought,' he said at the end of a long talk in his office, a few months into the campaign. 'It might have been better to let things run wild – to have a peasants' revolt. Maybe it would have been better to stand back and let people light fires on the hill.'

The Importance of Kennedy

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John Kennedy may be given what no American president since Grover Cleveland has had: a second chance. Cleveland lost the presidency after four years, waited out Benjamin Harrison's dreary term, and then regained office. Now the 1,000 days of John Kennedy are quite irretrievably beneath the sod of Arlington. But a Kennedy restoration, if somewhat more Gothic in flavour than Cleveland's, is still possible: Bobby is rising from the dust.

It should be easy enough for the younger Kennedy to plot his campaign. After all, he was an architect of the policies whose consequences he now opposes, of the rhetoric which he now attacks, of the appointments which he now condemns. He chose Lyndon Johnson for vice-president, and he brought Rusk, McNamara, Katzenbach and the Bundys into service. He made the deals which secured racist politicians and judges in their seats of power. He helped set the tone of the counter-revolutionary crusade, which began with candy and ended, inevitably, with napalm. Imperialism cannot stop with the Peace Corps and the Alianza para el Progreso; it progresses to C I A support of anti-communist régimes, through the John F. Kennedy Special Welfare Center (at Fort Bragg, North Carolina), into pacification programmes in Vietnam, the murder of Che in Bolivia, and the landing of marines in Santo Domingo. Its triumph – so far – is in the obliteration or subjugation of much of South-East Asia. Now that Bobby has seen how it all

works out, he may at least have an inkling of a corrective course.

If so, there is not much evidence of it in his first two weeks on the hustings. His criticism of the war seems to be based on the theory that it is immoral to deny self-determination to the Vietnamese people, although wise to refuse it to the Cubans. The point, of course, is that success is the only reliable test of imperial policies. The missile crisis worked; the war did not. For the 'other war' in America's cities, Kennedy proposes a kind of state capitalism: invest government funds in private corporations which will then raze and rebuild the slums for fun and profit. To be fair, he has embraced the President's riot commission report and its unstartling discovery of 'white racism'. But, to be accurate, he has given no indication that he knows what that means for the structure of US institutions, nor how they must be reconstituted to wipe it out.

All that will be matter for criticism if Bobby ever gets to be president. But for the moment, his candidacy offers a better, if not the best, or last, hope for America. For anyone looking for a political way out of the Vietnamese disaster, it is impossible to reject the Bobby phenomenon, even if it is equally impossible to enjoy it. Kennedy is real. The radical protests, the Senate doves and even the McCarthy campaign are not. They all have helped create the atmosphere in which a political alternative to Johnson could develop, but are no alternatives themselves.

Bobby alone can make it. He will exploit the Kennedy image as well as the Kennedy political machinery, now creaky but largely intact after five years of disuse, for a campaign that reaches beyond the vocal but thin anti-Johnson and anti-war constituency. Kennedy can go into Watts in his shirt-sleeves, into working-class quarters with

his gut Catholicism, and into a whole range of theoretically hostile environments with nothing more than *chutzpah*. McCarthy confines his campaign to university campuses and liberal suburbia; but even there the Kennedy pull is strong. More than that, Kennedy can persuade politicians, candidates, union leaders and probably some businessmen that he is in the campaign to win, not just to formulate a 'dialogue'. Unlike McCarthy, he can promise a pay-off.

Whether he will make good on that promise is another matter. Already a fair number of Democratic operatives have declared their support, and more have assumed positions of 'neutrality'. In the election-year context, of course, to be neutral is to strike at Johnson. Kennedy announced his candidacy too late to enter most of the primary elections, but he is on the ballot in Nebraska, Oregon and California, and he could build up successes there into a formidable opposition to the President at the Chicago convention. If McCarthy drops out along the way, Kennedy will get almost all of his support. All it will take to finish Johnson at that point is the defection of a few key party bosses.

The fluidity of the political situation makes it almost impossible to predict what will happen next week, let alone in August. For one thing, the President has not yet begun to counter-attack. As President, if not as Lyndon Johnson, he has vast stores of resources and an arsenal of weapons to use against serious threats to his power. He could, if necessary, try to manipulate the war (one way or the other) to undercut Kennedy at his most vulnerable moment. He could try a diversionary move in Latin America or a diplomatic coup in Europe. But although the resources are there, it is not clear that Johnson has available *possible* strategies for mobilizing them. De-

escalation in Vietnam might well bring about the total disintegration of the Saigon government; escalation might cause more rather than less division at home (it was the rumour that 206,000 more soldiers were requested for Vietnam that won it for McCarthy in New Hampshire). Events over which the President has little control may have paralysing effect. If the economic crisis deepens (which is likely) or the Vietcong make another successful blitz (more likely), Johnson will be the automatic loser.

Kennedy at this point stands only to gain from fresh disasters. The political attack on him so far is weak; it consists primarily of criticism of his 'style', and comes from the old Stevensonians and their heirs, who support McCarthy. They are apparently willing to ignore McCarthy's long record of cynicism and petty sell-out in the Senate, the while raging against Kennedy's grander opportunism in entering the presidential contest after McCarthy's lonely winter. What they dislike most is Kennedy's ability to use political power; in the common myth, morality consists not in using power wisely but in not using it at all.

Two months ago it was possible to dismiss the whole election year as a boring, because certain, demonstration of the futility of conventional politics. Suddenly the rhetoric of the campaign has to be put into the conditional mood. Even if Kennedy loses the nomination, his candidacy has achieved a major objective – perhaps its most important meaning. He has restored some faith in two-party politics as a way to solve important national problems. If Johnson wins, it will not be for lack of an alternative; people can say that they tried, and failed, not that they could not try at all. In the aftermath of loss, Kennedy would continue to be a legitimate political focus for dissent. It would be hard to prove to many Americans

that the political system is still as bankrupt as it appeared to be in February. Kennedy's role is to 'save the system from the inside', as the historians said of Franklin Roosevelt. That is, he must resolve the most glaring conflicts while keeping power distributed according to the current formula. Specifically, he must not disturb the rapid movement toward the concentration of corporate power, nor erode the trend to imperial expansion, nor encourage the development of institutions of black unity. His mission is to end the war and stop the riots. Those are not small favours; but favours are what they are.

The Thaw

New York Review of Books 25.4.68

There is a cord which is strung from the winter of 1948 until now, and along it hang the politics, the events, and the personalities of one long, cold season of history. The length of span is far less than an epoch and still greater than a generation, and one day the period may seem to be not much more than a journalistic conception: the 'Cold War decades'. But now people have been seized with the sense (it is as vague as that) that the strands have come together and the cord is somehow complete. It is only when such periods end that we can begin to describe them (and much later to define them), for only in their endings do their beginnings make sense. For Czechoslovakia, the sending-down of Novotny seems to complete a course which began with the throwing-out of Masaryk twenty years before, even if what will follow remains unclear. For the U S, there is stark symmetry between the election of Truman and the abdication of Johnson; the formation of the Cold War coalition in the Democratic Party in 1948 gains an essential clarity of relief against its dissolution in 1968.

The events of these weeks hardly constitute a revolution, but they do seem to follow Lenin's description of a revolutionary time in which things fall rapidly out of place and historical space is compressed. The motive force, of course, has been the war in Vietnam, and the prime movers are the guerrillas of the South and the armies of the North. Their Têt offensive, despite its limited military accomplishments (and objectives), had

the power to wrench the vision of Americans – and others to the extent that America touches them – from one perspective of the world to another. The realities of the war were not much changed; troop ratios, supply lines, areas of control, and the distribution of firepower are not significantly different today from what they were in late November when the Johnson Administration's great optimism campaign began. What has changed radically is the way the war is perceived and it is from that new expectation that a new politics has developed.

The expectation that the expedition in Vietnam was doomed destroyed world-wide confidence in the ability of America to solve its monetary problems, and led directly to the gold crisis (really a dollar crisis). That set the teeth of the American corporate and financial establishment on edge; both the money managers and the industrial directors yearned for retreat. Reinforcing their misery, profits declined in some of the biggest, most highly technologized defence industries. The war turned out to be a bear. Crucial confirmation was supplied by the *Wall Street Journal*, which in an editorial on 23 February advised its readers to 'prepare for defeat', and be more or less grateful for it. Not only the professional anti-war students and protesters had seen what was coming. Business magazines and investment newsletters had been as full of protest, in their own ways, as any liberal journal. But those who had learned their lessons early (David Rockefeller, for instance, began to fear imperial over-extension last year) could conceive of no way to translate their fears into political action, for some reason. American corporatists, with all their immense resources and potential power, have never figured out how to play their roles as political actors. Now the politicians have struck out on their own. They have gained legitimacy for an anti-war position

indirectly from the Viet Cong, by way of the ranks of desperate voters and nervous business leaders. While the Administration could still pretend that there was hope of military victory in Vietnam, the old Cold War vetoes obliged politicians to maintain a respectful anti-communism and a determination to contain the world revolution. With that hope gone in Vietnam, the restrictions were removed.

Eugene McCarthy saw the opportunity earliest of all. His own intense dislike of the war led him into the presidential campaign, but his feeling of isolation from the centre of political power probably made him underestimate the possibilities for a broad 'peace' candidacy, and for several months he refused to believe that he was doing much more than creating a 'dialogue'. Robert Kennedy was no less unhappy about the war (on any possible scale of feeling), but much more hung up on power. For him, dialogue was insignificant; the Presidency was not. But he feared that Johnson could finagle the war – escalation here, a bombing pause there – and out-manoeuvre his own campaign strategy. The results of the Thanksgiving Week optimism speeches gave confirming evidence; the President's popularity rose to its highest point in a year, and support of the war gained commensurately.

The NLF (or General Giap, or whoever) had to sacrifice thousands of lives and use large reserves of its power simply to destroy the President's fantasies. But it worked, and the political situation was suddenly more fluid than it had ever been. Johnson was in a box. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in its hearings with Secretary Rusk, made serious congressional politics out of the war for the first time. A panel of some of the most

important men in the Senate spent two days on national network television staking out a hard opposition to the war; at the very least, they voted a blanket 'no confidence' in any future escalation the President might attempt. The hearings, like the New Hampshire primary in the same week, were held under the cloud of 'rumours' that General Westmoreland had requested 206,000 more troops in Vietnam. There is no telling how many votes all that cost Johnson in the primary, but the ratio of rumoured troops to real votes was probably no more favourable to him than that of soldiers to guerrillas in Vietnam. Even at ten to one (and even with a technical 'victory'), Johnson lost.

The political difficulty of escalation was only half of the President's predicament. The other part was the difficulty of de-escalation because of the weakened structure of the Saigon government in Vietnam. As the Kennedy strategists figured it, the US command could stop the bombing or begin negotiations only at the enormous risk of destroying the remnants of General Thieu's authority, and pushing many of the provincial administrators (and perhaps whole ARVN battalions) into the NLF's arms. Already Thieu was proposing a new *bac tien* ('march to the North'), as former President Nguyen Khanh had done in July 1964, when his government was in similar straits. Then, the US had supported him with the manufacture of the Tonkin 'incident' and the resulting air strikes on North Vietnam. This time, domestic politics made support all but impossible.

Kennedy concluded easily if prematurely that Johnson was trapped. From all reports, Kennedy's vision on the morning after the New Hampshire primary was not terribly clear. It sounded as if he were half-way up the wall before the final returns were in, and his aides had all

they could do to restrain him from declaring his candidacy before noon. He suddenly understood what many of them (Arthur Schlesinger, Adam Walinsky, Burke Marshall) had been saying for months: silence this spring would do him more political damage than defeat this summer. If Kennedy misjudged the President's ability to de-escalate, he guessed that any major change in the war strategy would go to his own advantage. As it turned out, of course, Kennedy was right; Johnson could not seriously sue for peace in Vietnam without admitting the vanity of his four-year strategy. In his April Fool's Eve speech, Johnson implicitly confessed that he had condemned 150,000 Americans to death or injury, and had completed the obliteration or subjugation of much of South-East Asia, for reasons that were now unimportant or irrelevant. He had no choice but to leave the Presidency. At least his epitaph might now be kinder than his press.

The first task before both Kennedy and McCarthy was to develop their political bases in preparation for an Administration onslaught. Their methods were essentially similar: to create a 'grass roots' movement of such intense enthusiasm and appeal as to overwhelm the more conventional sources of power at the President's command. The equation was simply stated: going into the first months of the campaign, Johnson had organized labour, the few big city Democratic machines, most of the state organizations where there are Democratic governors, a fair number of senators and congressional leaders up for re-election this year, and a rapidly dwindling number of industrial managers who supported him against Goldwater in 1964. Besides, a President ordinarily could manipulate events and the media that present them to the public for dominating attention. On the other side, there

were the unorganized peace constituencies scattered throughout suburbia, who might vote directly 'against the war', or simply against its symbol, Lyndon Jonson.

Even after New Hampshire, McCarthy had little hope of convincing those who enjoy power, rather than dialogue, that he could be in a position to deliver goods to them next year. His role was something like the demonstrators' – even the dirty ones, whom he dislikes; he opened a space for more conventional (and therefore more real) politics to operate. Kennedy shares the peaceniks and the 'kids' with McCarthy, but he does not stop there. He is out to build a new coalition, with nasty elements as well as nice ones, and he has an ability to attempt it that McCarthy, so far, does not. Kennedy rushes off to Watts, McCarthy had to suffer the embarrassment of Kennedy's success in the streets before he would venture into a Milwaukee ghetto. Kennedy immediately began calling in the political loans he had made over the years to the active new edge of labour. Even before his campaign announcement he flew to California to join a rally for Cesar Chavez's grape-strikers (one of Walter Reuther's favourite projects); McCarthy has no political methodology for gathering major labour support. Kennedy is not above brazening his way into working-class neighbourhoods and playing the old J F K line for the ethnic vote, no matter how racist or reactionary it may be. McCarthy may be tempted by the same prospect, but he has no taste for it, and he leaves much of the work to his lieutenants.

Anyone can make a list of the stylistic differences between Kennedy and McCarthy, and everyone will, before the campaign is over. But it is a stylistic difference, not one of basic politics, which distinguishes the two candidates. Bobby-watching has been the most fashion-

able political game for four long dry years, and it is now almost impossible to add any new arguments to move those who either completely identify with the good Bobby or are completely appalled by the bad. McCarthy only seems refreshing, because he is so little known; anyone who has followed his dreary senatorial record of petty sell-outs to the oil and gas industries, or his petulant antagonism to the first Kennedy administration, or his cynical attitude to politics in general, will find him no more appealing, though no less, than Kennedy. But McCarthy's past record (unlike Kennedy's) is no issue now. His attraction lies in his low key, disorganized, highly personal operation, which is so easily distinguished from the Kennedy razzmatazz. A sizeable class of politically interested, well-educated voters gets the comfortable feeling that McCarthy means what he says, although for a while he appeared to be running more against John Quincy Adams in 1824 than Lyndon Johnson (and Robert Kennedy and Richard Nixon) 144 years later.

McCarthy's main bloc of popular support so far (or at least the leading edge) comes from the old Stevensonian party and its spiritual heirs. The older types, at least, never liked the Kennedys in the first place (although they were sucked in eventually like everyone else). They remember that McCarthy's noblest effort was his nomination of Stevenson at the 1960 Democratic convention. McCarthy's 'second choice' that year, he told an interviewer at the time, was Lyndon Johnson. The 'clean for Gene' crew is a widely mixed bag of earnest young people, not unlike the Kennedy youth brigade, and both led by cadres of decidedly *unalienated* young operators. Like Sam Brown, the Harvard Divinity School student who has been a principal in the McCarthy drive in New England, they are the kind of kids who have been making

their way in the youth 'establishment' by adopting the rhetoric of the radical movements while maintaining the politics and the style of the liberal system. Brown, for instance, was an NSA Advisory Board officer who helped save the organization after its CIA connexion was disclosed. No doubt Kennedy will have counterparts to Brown in plenty. There is more than one way of making it in the youth bag this year.

All of that helps to determine the political locus of the campaign. Under it, both Kennedy and McCarthy had been working for the same broad objectives: to 'save' the Democratic Party, and by extension the country, by reforming the most undemocratic aspects of the one and liquidating the worst failures of the other. In the dead of winter, the US was deep in a kind of despair that had not been felt since the pre-Roosevelt depression. Whether the institutions of the republic were in the state of degeneracy they appeared to be is arguable; what was obvious to everyone was that there were no enlivening political alternatives and, in a sense, no politics. For a society that so completely identifies its nature with its political structure, that is a killing weakness.

The Viet Cong made politics possible again; McCarthy made it thinkable; Kennedy made it seem workable. The importance of the campaign is not that it will solve America's problems, or that either Kennedy or McCarthy will even win – in August or November. But even if they ultimately lose, the political system will have been seen to work. It has produced alternatives, which is its function. The fact that even those alternatives present secondary, not elemental, choices, is by and large ignored. Neither Kennedy nor McCarthy will even think of breaking up the concentration of corporate power which is at the heart of America's un-democracy and produces the

effects of imperialism and racism which the candidates decry. Neither will move to disengage the power of America from its necessarily domineering role in the world; indeed, both have said that only by ending the war in Vietnam can the country get on with the business of consolidating its power elsewhere. Neither, finally, can encourage the development of institutions of black unity which, for the moment at least, seem to be the only way for black people to fight the nightmare oppression of racism. What it will take to do all that is a politics independent of a Kennedy or McCarthy or Nixon Administration; radicals have their work cut out for them.

The two candidacies together (more successfully than either one could have done) have let loose a surge of energy in the society which is essential if anything good is to happen. It is the direction of that energy which confirms the end of the last 'twenty years' crisis'. It is focused against the Cold War. It opposes the centralization of bureaucratic power which has characterized the organization of government since the New Deal. It implicitly establishes many of the values of 'liberation' which the youth movements have produced. It denies the pre-eminence of anti-communism as the dominant ideology.

Johnson's Sunday spectacular represented an Americanized version of a government's fall. It was all played with makeshift, parapolitical institutions that substitute for direct confrontations of power in this country. The *New York Times* 'presented' the government's motion to escalate the war by bannerizing the rumour of the huge troop increase. The next day, the Fulbright hearings registered a vote of congressional no confidence, and the defection of Johnson stalwarts (such as Symington) as well as the usual opponents indicated that the President's

majority was cracking. The New Hampshire primary was the indicative by-election. The entrance of Kennedy was the symbolic reappearance of the old hero who had been waiting in his Northern Virginia Colombey-les-deux-Eglises for the magic moment. Johnson's speech was his resignation.

As always, the major factors in the President's decision were political. In New Hampshire, he saw that Clark Clifford's 1948 strategy of smearing the Left opposition with treason and fellow-travelling could not work this time around. After that, there was really no other available method for victory. No doubt the President heard from Mayor Daley in Chicago, from National Committeeman Edwin Weisl in New York and their counterparts in other states, and their messages must have been the same: all systems fail.

What politics may come are completely unpredictable, for the rush of events is by no means over. Whatever the NLF and the North Vietnamese do now will have powerful effects on US politics. So far, there is no reason to doubt the brilliance of their strategy; the Khe Sanh siege and the Têt offensive broke the resolve of America to pursue the war, as they always predicted (and Johnson always feared) it would.

A classic element in the stock scenario for the failure of a war and the fall of a government is the attempted coup by the generals. Whether it is a possibility, in any attenuated form, in this situation is difficult to say. There is no charismatic general to lead it, and in fact much of the military establishment has been distinctly dove-ish in the past six months. There has been a steady stream of news leaks from the Pentagon meant to embarrass the commander-in-chief, and reports from Vietnam indicate that US officers in the provinces – through the

rank of colonel – think the war has been much of a bad bargain, and would just as soon be out of it. Defence informants have told McCarthy of the preparations for use of tactical nuclear weapons, and the *New York Times* heard all about General Westmoreland's absurdly optimistic appraisal of the war in January.

Humphrey could now enter the campaign on his own, or the President could endorse (or seem to endorse) one or another candidate; perhaps the favour McCarthy did for Johnson in 1960 could now be returned, as a means to 'stop Kennedy'. Humphrey would be a logical focus for the affections of the Johnson die-hards who cannot bear the thought of a more contemporary candidate: labour, the state machines, the conservative corporatists, and the unreconstructed New Dealers. They might try to promote Humphrey on a peace-and-continuity platform. And if the projected pre-negotiation 'talks' between the US and North Vietnam are more immediately productive than now seems likely, the President himself could emerge as a draft candidate at the Democratic convention in August. We will all need a strong stomach.

But already the first effects of the thaw can be seen. The New Left, which had hoped for a grand breakthrough into above-ground politics this summer, finds suddenly that its potential base (which it never organized) has evaporated into the Kennedy phenomenon. Draft resistance work will go on but now many youths hope they can win a little time with draft appeals boards before the war ends and their resistance becomes moot. The 'hippie thing', which blossomed in a time of political stasis, is showing signs of rapid decay. The 'old liberalism', which died with the end of the Johnson consensus, is being replaced by a newer form, which is no closer to radicalism but has an originality and contemporaneity

no one could foresee. Throughout, there is a sense of breathing space in the society at last, a hope that the next months will not bring the boot heel down on everyone who is trying to resist.

Best of all, the war is coming to an end. Not that there won't be much more fighting, and not excluding the possibility that an act of rage or duplicity could elevate that conflict again into a still larger calamity. But it is hard to see how any now or future president can again maintain a winning face. The huge problem of liquidation remains – for Kennedy as well as Nixon, or for President Johnson. But the old cord has snapped, and the new one begins with at least the expectation of peace.

No Hope from Miami Beach

New Statesman 9.8.68

Committed by intuition and interests to the sinfulness of mankind, Republicans have always shown a fine sensitivity to the futility of political action. Liberal columnists remark on the Republican 'death wish', but the instinct is really pre-Freudian: they are prisoners of a deadly grace which does not allow the efficacy of good works. The party found its perfect hero in Barry Goldwater because he expressed the inevitability of human defeat: now its choice of Miami Beach for the 1968 convention completes the metaphor.

Nothing tangible or spiritual in this desolate sandpit resort holds hope for repairing a wounded nation. The 1,333 delegates, the journalists without number, the Pepsi-Cola girls, the flag-wavers, sign-carriers and security guards must have the sense that they have been cast east of Eden. From the air, the skyline is stupefying, but from below the great hotels are seen to be made of plaster of Paris, the statues of Winged Victory and the Medici Venuses are of papier-mâché, the sun-tanned holiday-trippers are geriatric specimens. Inside the enormous public rooms, the wallpaper is peeling and the carpets are soiled and threadbare.

Like the place, the party is terribly vulnerable. Ordinarily, the median age in Miami Beach is said to be fifty-six, and the presence of the delegates must raise that considerably. They are old and tired and they look bored. Demonstrations for candidates are smaller and less enthusiastic than at any previous convention anyone can

remember. Television cameras shoot from low angles to make the crowds appear bigger, and newsmen inflate their estimates of the excitement in order to justify the importance of their own assignments. But hardly anyone claims that there is much to report. 'This is the lull before the lull,' a convention veteran said dispiritedly last weekend.

The Republican Party may well rule the country for the next four years, and the delegates suppose that the man they nominate for president a few days from now may have more luck than most Republican candidates in the past thirty-six years. But somehow those possibilities fail to enliven the proceedings or dispel a certain sub-tropical ennui. Geography and mentality combine to remove the Republicans from poverty, race conflict and war: the hum of air-conditioning – in cars and hotels and the convention hall – drowns out all outside noises.

To be fair, the major candidates have done their best to revive the imagery of convention hoop-la. They have pretty girls in neat uniforms passing out buttons and bumper-stickers. Governor Rockefeller hired a steamboat to puff along Indian Creek on the landward side of the beach strip. Aeroplanes trailing banners fly along the seaward coast promoting one or another candidate. The *Nixon Nominator*, the *Rockefeller Roll-Call* and other convention newspapers are slipped under the doors of hotel rooms, but it is hard to believe that any adult would take seriously the tone of their 'news': 'New York, N Y – the powerful people-appeal of Richard M. Nixon's presidential campaign is turning up massive support among independents and organized labour and their families.'

But half-way through the convention (as this is written) there is unusual agreement among press and politicians that it is an expensive non-event. Not many conventions

in other years have been relevant to the country's problems: what is unusual now is the *agreement* that this one cannot connect with the outside crisis. In the past three years, Americans have been politicized to a degree which the professional politicians cannot imagine. The mythology of convention politics simply is no longer credible, and while most people cannot easily see the change in themselves, they all know that the steamboats and slogans are unimportant to what really matters in their lives.

It will take a long time for the institutions of politics to reflect those changing ideas. The Republicans, the television networks, and the bumper-sticker manufacturers have a great deal invested in the old structures. If nothing else, the conventions provide employment for thousands of otherwise underemployed people, and they hold a certain therapeutic value for bored suburbanites and college students who pass out literature and carry posters.

Other than that, the conventions provide few services for popular democracy. The parties have built bases of their own élites, and the choice of a nominee must follow their narrow interests. A convention vote merely legitimizes the process. Rockefeller has called for an 'open convention', which means one in which his popularity exceeds Nixon's. But it is only a matter of popularity – either man would be an acceptable candidate, and provide acceptable administrations with no basic policy difference between them. In theory, a Reagan or a Lindsay could be nominated and elected, but in practice they would be forced to abandon whatever right-wing or left-liberal tendencies they espoused, and move towards the Republican Centre. (In California, Reagan has done just that: while keeping up the rightest rhetoric, he has made no serious changes in the expansionist

welfare-liberalism of his Democratic and Republican predecessors.)

With full knowledge of the implausibility of anything unexpected happening at the conventions, people are still drawn to attend. Rumours abound ('Billy Graham for vice-president?') because they offer relief from dull certainty. As often happens at circuses of other kinds, the freak shows on the side become more interesting than the main event. Here they are fascinating but depressing. The funniest and saddest oddity is Harold Stassen, a boy-wonder Governor of Minnesota twenty-five years ago, who has run for the presidential nomination four times, and this week will be nominated by his nephew, a member of some delegation or other, predictably to the accompaniment of patronizing laughter.

Others are sadder, because more real: the 'concerned Afro-American Republicans' who are barely recognized by the delegations (ninety-eight per cent white), the handful of returned Peace Corps volunteers and students who hand out leaflets protesting against the war, the 'poor people's campaign' stragglers parading down the hotel strip with their mule-train, workers for a 'new party' coalition trying to pick up disaffected Republicans to join New Left radicals and McCarthy liberals in an improbable realignment. The Republicans welcome their presence because it makes the convention seem important, but they cannot take any of it seriously. Issues are considered only once – in the party platform, which is discarded by common consent on the day after it is adopted. Candidates are then free to say and do what they please, unencumbered by irrelevant concerns.

Political science professors used to say that such 'pragmatism' is what democratic politics is all about, that America's political strength lies in its relegation of

'ideology' to an evening's consideration once every four years. If that is true, America should be strong and healthy. Perhaps it is, but if you listen carefully – even here in Miami Beach – you can almost hear the rats in the walls.

Nixon's Deal

New Statesman 16.8.68

The discovery of an historic conservatism in the Republican Party must surely qualify as the least original piece of research of the year. Nevertheless, both press and politicians at Miami Beach last week seemed genuinely surprised to see the Nixon-Agnew ticket materialize on the Right side of the political middle. Even as the party convention opened, the cleverest columnists were predicting a Republican move to the left. The *New York Times* considered a Rockefeller nomination likely right up to the day of Nixon's easy first-ballot victory. Then, as Agnew was being chosen, the *Times* proclaimed in an eight-column headline: 'Support for Lindsay in 2nd Place Growing.'

In that case, a wish was mother of the invention. Mayor Lindsay had been ruled out before the convention began because of his 'liberalism' – that is, his tentative acceptance of Negroes' social demands, or at least his fear of rejecting them altogether. Rockefeller had never been a likely nominee. Aside from his personal offensiveness to Republicans of many persuasions, his politics has a minority constituency within the party. Only accidents of history or hang-ups of status keep Rockefeller liberals from being Humphrey moderates.

Nothing that happened in Miami derailed the Republicans from the track they have been riding since the first world war. With only minor variations for individual personalities, the party and its candidates have proposed or conducted caretaker administrations. Their tones have

been mild isolationism abroad and *laissez-faire* at home; but the basic themes of the developing American empire – which promote the opposite notions of foreign interventionism and economic manipulation – have not really been seriously threatened. General Eisenhower, after all, was more cautious in his overseas strategies than any Democratic president of this century; but he hardly turned back the course of empire. At the same time, he only slowed but did not suspend the steady crawl towards 'welfare-corporatism'.

Nixon may be several cuts below Eisenhower in heroic style, but he is not far removed from the same political point of view. All the talk of a new-new Nixon, an old-new Nixon, or a new-old Nixon (not to mention an old-old Nixon, which is closest to the truth) misses that point: any Nixon, as candidate or president, must cater to the Republican base, which hopes for an end to foreign adventures and diminution of bureaucratic control – but is willing to put up with both rather than cause a fuss.

To get what he wanted, Nixon (like everybody) had to make the usual pact with the devil. This time, the Mephistophelean agent was Senator J. Strom Thurmond, of South Carolina, who both looks and sounds the part. With the one possible exception of George Wallace, Thurmond is America's leading racist politician, with a firm grasp on the championships in militarism, super-patriotism and general nastiness as well. Thurmond has been a republican for only four years: before that, he was governor of his state, a ponderously decorated major-general in the army reserve, the 'Dixiecrat' candidate for the presidency in 1948 (he carried four states and won thirty-nine electoral votes), and a Democratic senator. He changed parties because of the general drift of the Democrats towards communism, miscegenation, or whatever.

For the most part, Thurmond had not changed with his re-affiliation. 'Do you vote differently as a Republican?' an interviewer recently asked him. 'Uhv co'se naht,' Thurmond replied. But in one particular he has dramatically reformed; once a maverick, he is now the very soul of party loyalty, ready and willing to compromise the principles of pure reaction for political victory, however ideologically diluted. Several weeks before the Republican convention, Thurmond announced his endorsement of Nixon's candidacy, and he confided his intention of aborting the campaigns of Governor Reagan (within the party) and George Wallace (in the actual election).

Thurmond succeeded in the one, and may well pull off the other, and his achievement illustrates just how regionalistic the US political system remains. Thurmond's Deep South represents a minority in the country in population, economic power, voting strength and almost every other standard of political importance. But it is a crucially important bloc in the balance of power. In the past twenty years, the South has proved itself the only independent regional grouping: it has voted Republican (for Goldwater), Democratic (for Kennedy), both (for Stevenson and Eisenhower) and neither (for Thurmond and various other third-party candidates). In the conventions of both parties, Southern states like to vote as a bloc in order to throw the nomination to the 'Northern' candidate of their choice.

In Miami, Thurmond assumed the role of regional coordinator, a position usually held by a 'moderate' who can swing between the various interests. He stuck close to Nixon; he was there at the airport when Nixon arrived, and in every important decision the candidate made, Thurmond was the chief consultant. Thurmond convinced Southern delegates who were tempted by Reagan's

approaches that a vote against Nixon would, finally, benefit only Rockefeller. Furthermore, he could tell the Southerners authoritatively that Nixon had promised to respect their interests 'for the sake of developing a two-party system in the South', that is, for the sake of getting Southern states solidly in the Republican Party. At the end, only a handful of delegates went to Reagan; the rest stayed with Nixon and provided his margin of victory over the combination of opposing candidates. Forty-five per cent of Nixon's votes came from Southern states which held only a fifth of the total convention voting power.

The details of Nixon's deal with Thurmond are not entirely known, if indeed they were ever clearly articulated by the principals. Most probably, the 'pact' was more of an understanding: Thurmond would deliver the South at the convention (and would help to cut Wallace in favour of Nixon in the campaign) in return for some kind of power of veto over liberals and liberalism.

The first evidence, of course, was Nixon's choice of Spiro Agnew as his vice-president. Agnew ran for the governorship of Maryland two years ago as a racial moderate against a wild segregationist, but since then he has earned and won the animosity of the state's Negroes. Agnew most recently struck a strange blow for civil rights by advising police to shoot looters on sight: 'it doesn't matter if they steal a T V set or \$1,000,' he said.

But Thurmond will get more later. He will have a veto over the choice of attorney-general in a Nixon administration, and there would probably follow Thurmond-inspired crackdowns on students, black militants, and insurgents of all kinds. What is unknown is the effect of Nixon's 'Southern strategy' on the Vietnam war: one theory suggests that Nixon will gain pro-American, anti-communist legitimacy from his alliance with the South,

and may be in a better political position than any liberal to dispose of the US 'commitment'. The assumption there is that all the pressures, on balance, will push Nixon towards the quickest settlement. It is not a bad bet; but the whole bargain – foreign peace for domestic repression – is hardly a good deal.

Serving Time

Empires demand only one basic tribute: the independence of their subjects. They may countenance abuse, reform, or disorder; they will never allow liberty. The C I A, the *New York Times*, Time Incorporated, and the enormous bureaucratic corporations that hold controlling power in America are all 'liberal' and tolerant as far as that goes; after all, that is the most modern way to put down individual or collective revolution. Doctor Levy, who is now in the middle of his three-year prison term, was just too independent for the imperial command. But his case was obvious; millions of others never even know they are not free, and all the while the managers of America are devising new ways to keep us all in ignorance.

Doctor's Plot

New York Review of Books 29.6.67

At eleven in the morning of a drizzly day in June, Captain Howard Brett Levy, M D, was seized and manacled from a barracks courtroom, and carried off in a staff car to the stockade at Fort Jackson, S C. He stayed the night in a small bare cell behind a crude wood-and-wire door, and the next day was inexplicably moved to an empty ward at the post hospital where he had served for nearly two years. There he is confined, under constant watch by an M P, as he begins a sentence of three years at hard labour for crimes of conscience and belief. In a sense, Levy concurred in the findings of the court martial. He did what they said he did, and he is not sorry. He killed no guard, threw no bomb, raped no white woman, stole no secrets, packed no pumpkin. Nobody framed him; he is the wanted man. What is in contention is not the fact of his actions, but their meaning. Levy refuses to be complicit in a war he abhors; the Army calls that disobedient. He accepts responsibility for the consequences of his acts; that is unbecoming conduct, and it promotes disloyalty. Levy did not seek to change the Army, but to ignore it, and he wanted not martyrdom but expression. The Army, in the way it often does, gave him just what he did not want.

Levy's progress from Brooklyn, where he was born thirty years ago, to the Fort Jackson stockade is lined with milestones familiar to his generation. He was the only child of conventionally nice Jewish parents. Toward the end of high school, he became vaguely aware of politics:

'If I had been old enough I would have voted for Eisenhower.' At NYU he studied hard ('I had to, I wasn't brilliant'), assembled a respectable record, and became the president of a fraternity which he helped found. 'It was designed to do everything that fraternities don't do,' he said. In that case, it was a useful way of avoiding the conformism of the era without actually opting out.

'The most radical thing I did in the Fifties,' Levy said in the course of a long conversation one afternoon in the middle of the court martial, 'was to go to folk music concerts, or read the Elektra Records catalogue.' He went to Downstate Medical Center in 1958; in 1962 he interned at Maimonides Hospital in Brooklyn. 'I was interested in the money part of medicine,' he said. 'But then a real change happened. I took part of my residency at Bellevue, and I was working with people who were destitute and downtrodden and completely cynical about the system. I began to identify with their problems in a real way.'

There were others in America who were turning off 'the system' in those years, but the effect of the new 'generational' mood was indirect at best. 'There was absolutely nobody to talk to. I tried to talk all the time. Everyone I knew disagreed. You know, if you hang around with old socialists all the time you begin to think that everyone's a socialist; it just ain't true. If you hang around with liberals, you think that everyone's a liberal. That just ain't true. But the people I hung around with were racists, and most people are racists. Period.'

Levy read Paul Goodman and C. Wright Mills and went to lectures by Negro radicals. He listened to WBAI, the audience-supported radio station, and when its licence was in jeopardy, he wrote a letter to the FCC. The licence was renewed, and Levy was encouraged to write to President Johnson and the New York senators –

'all those irrelevant people' – on weightier matters. But now the letters did not do much good. The first 'really activist thing' he did was join a welfare workers' picket line in 1965 in New York. 'I was uncomfortable as hell,' he remembered. 'It was freezing and raining and a terrible day. But most of it was just the fear of having my friends see me.'

At about that time, Levy's marriage began to disintegrate. He had married right after medical school, before his ideas of himself and his world began to change. 'I said screw all the materialism; I don't want to be poor, but I'm not interested in the money part.' Like many of his contemporaries whom he had never met and who were also changing, Levy began to believe that he might spend a part of his life in gaol. There was nothing romantic about it. 'Individual martyrdom is irrelevant in this society,' he thought, 'but sometimes you get yourself into situations. At Bellevue I saw people lined up in the morning defecating without even screens between them. That's just degrading. The *aim* is degradation. I feel more strongly about that than about Vietnam.'

In medical school, Levy had signed up with the Army's Berry Plan, which allows doctors to finish their training before accepting the inevitable draft call. There is no 'selective' service for doctors; it is an across-the-board sweep, with no deferments for family status, few for physical impairments, and eligibility until the age of thirty-six. Levy was to report to the Army in July 1965. Because of the crush of new commissions at the end of the academic year, there was no room for him in the orientation course given most Army doctors at Fort Sam Houston, Tex. He was expected at Fort Jackson, and for weeks beforehand he was anxious and depressed. He

drank a lot and came home sick. His marriage was about over, and it was hard for him to separate the two traumas of change.

'It wasn't the regimentation of the Army that bothered me,' Levy said, 'although I didn't like it. It was Vietnam; it bothered me a lot then, and it bothers me a lot more now.' He was two days late for duty at Fort Jackson (car trouble). He checked into the B O Q the first night, discovered there was no hot water in the shower, and moved to an off-post apartment the next day. The second rebellion came soon afterward when he found a twelve-dollar bill for officers' club dues on his desk. He never paid it – or the bills which followed. He was not terribly popular with his superiors.

Fort Jackson is a basic-training centre with a large transient population and not much connexion with the neighbouring city of Columbia. 'Fort Jackson is barren of intellect, barren of life: the people aren't really alive in any sense of the term,' Levy said. He felt isolated. One Saturday morning in a Columbia coffee shop he noticed an item in the paper about a Negro voter registration drive in a town called Newberry, S.C. Levy had no idea where it was. But he quickly paid his bill and started out to find the action. Somehow, he made his way to the county courthouse, where a demonstration was in progress. He found the local organizer, a young white Army veteran named Bill Treanor, and volunteered his services.

'It was very simple then, very romantic. The next afternoon we registered an old man in his nineties,' Levy recalled. 'He was all bent over, a sharecropper all his life, and he was so proud with his yellow registration slip. It made us feel so good. I don't think I'd feel the same way today.'

Levy went to Newberry every weekend that summer, and in the fall joined in civil rights work in Columbia. Later, he staged a fund-raising rhythm-and-blues show ('it was monumentally unsuccessful financially but extremely successful artistically'), and last year began to publish an eight-page biweekly newspaper for the movement called *Contrast*. But civil rights organizing is not a usual pastime for a white Army officer in South Carolina, and Levy soon piqued the interest of the Counter-Intelligence Corps. Investigators got to him shortly after the summer project was over and questioned him closely about his politics, his reading matter, and his organizational affiliations. They were worried about the sponsorship of the Negro radicals' lectures (Trotskyist), and were not calmed by Levy's assurances that he only went to listen. They asked him to take a lie-detector test, and he refused. Finally, they asked whether he would follow an order of a superior officer under any circumstances, and Levy said, of course he would not.

All along, there had been minor run-ins with authority. Levy never could manage to wear his uniform correctly, nor keep his shoes shined, nor remember to have his hair cut. His manner is abrupt and defensive at times, but he can easily be warm and eager with those for whom he feels some companionship. More than anything, he is Brooklynesque, with none of the assimilated 'shoe-ness' of the med-student style. That suits Levy and his friends, but it is not always successful with the types at Fort Jackson. One day he had an argument with an M P officer: something about a parking ticket. 'I was short with him,' Levy admitted. In his report, the M P gave more details:

When told to come to attention and salute, subject smirked, came to attention on one leg and half heartedly put his hand

near his head with his fingers in a crumpled position, then threw his hand in the direction of the wall. His left hand remained in his pocket. Throughout the conversation, CAPT. LEVY was insubordinate by facial expression, body movement and vocal inflection. Subject needed a haircut and his branch and U S insignia were in reverse manner.

On post, Levy spent his time running a small dermatology clinic for soldiers (V D), dependents (acne), and retired personnel (psoriasis). He was well thought of professionally. Col Chester H. Davis, the hospital's executive officer, had no complaints about the way Levy treated him for a dry spot on the buttocks ('Don't wash so much'). Then Fort Jackson initiated a training programme for Special Forces medical aidmen – the part-combat, part-medic complement of the Green Berets – and Levy was assigned to give each of them five days of instruction in dermatology.

He trained them for three or four months – 'with some reservations' – and found them the most interesting people on the base. There was a striking similarity between the backgrounds of the Green Berets and white civil rights workers: the alienation from middle-class families, the feeling of being trapped by the society, the urge to have some effect of one's own.

I talked to them about the war and about themselves, but after a while I realized that it wasn't doing any good. For a time, I pulled the kind of crap that some of the other doctors did – they just let the aidmen hang around and never really trained them. Then, last June, I just kicked them out.

It wasn't intellectualized in the beginning, but I had two reasons. First, I don't think you can possibly train guys for five days in dermatology to a point where they'll do more good than harm. And second, I don't think medicine should be used for

political purposes. You can't separate it from the war. It's part and parcel of the same thing.

Levy's earlier commander heard that the aidmen had been refused training, but he let the matter slide after an inconclusive interview with the Captain. But Col Henry Franklin Fancy, who took command of the hospital in mid-summer of 1966, was not quite so complaisant. He had noticed the 'flag' on Levy's personnel file, denoting a security risk; 'communistic', Colonel Fancy thought to himself (as he testified later). Then Fancy began hearing reports that Levy was telling aidmen and patients that the war in Vietnam was wrong, that he would not serve in Vietnam if ordered, and that if he were a Negro soldier he would come home to fight for civil rights. As for the Green Berets: They were 'liars and thieves and killers of peasants and murderers of woman and children'. Worst of all, Levy had been talking like that to *enlisted* men, in violation of the responsibilities of rank.

Colonel Fancy was wondering just what to do when an intelligence agent told him the little secrets of Levy's 'G-2' dossier. The full richness of its 180 pages has not yet been revealed even to Levy's civilian lawyers, but it contained such spicy information as this interview with a sergeant:

Levy expressed very leftist ideas and viewpoints. He spoke favourably about those persons who burned their draft cards, feeling that this was their right, and they should not be prosecuted for this. Source does not consider subject a loyal American because of his statements condemning U S policies. . . . Levy was quite pro-Negro, to the side of the Negroes when discussing civil rights matters, and appeared to think more of the Negroid race than that of the White race.

Colonel Fancy told his executive officer, Colonel Davis, that Levy was a 'pinko'. Then, after consultations with Army lawyers, Fancy issued a formal order to Levy to train the Special Forces aidmen. Levy did not comply. Colonel Fancy was ready to take non-judicial disciplinary action when, after another close look at the G-2 dossier, he and Heaven knows who else decided to escalate the proceedings. Fancy charged Levy with wilful disobedience of an order (a capital offence in wartime), and with promoting disloyalty and disaffection among the troops. A general court martial was convened.

Levy is convinced that the ante was raised because of his politics, or Colonel Fancy's reading of them. There is nothing to suggest that the commandant was in any way flexible on the subject of pinkness. In a preliminary hearing, Colonel Fancy testified that the communist line, as he understands it, includes 'the requirement for world domination ... and the lack of what we consider God and their requirement not to believe in God. The requirement to agitate and propagandize in such a way that non-communist people's minds are maintained in a state of chronic anxiety in the hope that this will not impair their will to resist the communist domination.' The civil rights movement, he said, might well create such anxiety, and the anti-war protest was communist-based. That seemed to take care of Captain Levy. Colonel Fancy felt it necessary to warn a class of aidmen, in a graduation speech, to disregard the blandishments of left-wingers who might have infiltrated his hospital. Still, there was a touch of sentiment in the old bureaucrat. One day after the preliminary hearing had been concluded and the court martial was about to begin, Howard Levy received a birthday card in the mail: 'Look to this day for it is life,' the mes-

sage read. 'For yesterday is already a dream and tomorrow is only a vision. But today makes every yesterday a dream of happiness and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Hope your birthday is happy and the year ahead is full of all that means the most to you.' It was signed 'Bud and Cooksie Fancy'.

Exactly why the Army permitted the Levy trial to blow up out of all rational proportions is still unclear. But the proceedings seemed to take on a life of their own. The actors were swept along by a play they never wrote. Last fall, Levy told his girl friend, an art student at the University of South Carolina named Trina Sahli, that he believed no final action would be taken before he left the Army in July 1967. Levy's lawyers gave the authorities any number of escapes – including an application for conscientious-objector status, which was promptly refused. But the charges kept increasing. In February, a third count was added, for 'conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman', on the basis of the conversations with enlisted men. A few days later, two more came. They stemmed from a letter Levy wrote to Sgt Geoffrey Hancock in Vietnam, at the suggestion of Bill Treanor, the civil rights worker in Newberry. Treanor had been stationed in Hawaii with Hancock. The two regularly corresponded, and Hancock (a white man married to a Negro girl) expressed some concern about the Vietnam protest movement at home. Treanor thought Levy could tell Hancock how it was:

I am one of those people back in the states who actively opposes our efforts there and would refuse to serve there if I were so assigned [Levy wrote]. ... I do not believe that you can realistically judge the Vietnam war as an isolated incident. It must be viewed in the context of the recent history of our foreign policy – at least from the start of the cold war. ...

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Geoffrey, who are you fighting for? Do you know? . . . Your real battle is back here in the U S, but why must I fight it for you? The same people who suppress Negroes and poor whites here are doing it all over again all over the world and you're helping them. Why? You . . . know about the terror the whites have inflicted upon Negroes in our country. Aren't you guilty of the same thing with regard to the Vietnamese? A dead woman is a dead woman in Alabama and in Vietnam. To destroy a child's life in Vietnam equals a destroyed life in Harlem.

The letter went on for eight pages, with a great deal of explanation and obvious passion. It ended with an invitation for reply (the two had never met), but Hancock did not answer. He kept the letter for fourteen months in a pile of trash, and when he saw a television news broadcast about the Levy affair on Okinawa, turned it over to his superiors.

At some point, the Army began to worry about the effects of the trial. Its tactics began to seem a little more cool. Col Earl V. Brown, the service's chief law officer, was sent down from Washington to be the 'judge'. The Fort Jackson commanding general appointed a court martial composed of ten men of rank higher than Levy's, all career line officers, four of them combat veterans of Vietnam, and all but one Southerners. The line-up was out of a Frank Capra war movie: one quiet Negro, one inscrutable Nisei (both quite junior), and a major whose eye had been lost in a ('friendly') mine explosion in Vietnam. There were no Jews, or doctors, or captains, or enlisted men, or women, or non-career officers. For the prosecution, the Army found a young Jewish lawyer in a camp in Georgia and brought him to Fort Jackson. Someone in the Pentagon had been reading Zola.

Capt Richard M. Shusterman presents only one of the countless ironies of the Levy affair. Amiable, ambitious,

square, deferential, liberal, and crew-cut, Shusterman is everything that Levy is not. He believes in military necessity and good order, the proper balance between the rights of men and the demands of institutions, the mutability of moral standards. He asserts that the world is too complex to be understood, and he makes a positive value of that incomprehension. It gets him off the hook. If he had any doubts at the beginning, he had convinced himself of the moral rightness of his side by the time the court martial began. He even seemed to have allayed some of the difficulties he may once have had in supporting US policy in Vietnam.

Shusterman is Levy before Bellevue. He is the part of the generation of the late Fifties – by far the larger piece – which is continuous with its past, unmindful of its future. He votes for liberal Democrats and moderate Republicans, his favourite magazine is the *New Republic*, and he wishes that New Left students would shave their beards and dress neatly. It would help them sell their ideas in the market-place. Phi Beta Kappa at Lafayette, a full scholarship to Penn Law, and a job, perhaps, with a toney firm in Philadelphia that now and then takes a few well turned-out Jews. He doesn't mind the officers' club at all, but would defend to the death anyone's right not to like it. Except, of course, when he is the chief prosecutor.

The trial began on 10 May, in a small low-ceilinged hut on a sandy knoll at Fort Jackson. The court assembled each morning at 0900 hours, as everyone was fond of saying, in the way tourists on their first trip abroad enjoy the simplest Berlitz phrase. Newsmen and spectators drove to the court through fields of recruits doing calisthenics, romping over the 'confidence course' (formerly, the obstacle course), or charging aimlessly with fixed bayonets.

Women remarked sadly on the youthfulness of the soldiers marching down the roads.

Shusterman had an easy job. He had to prove that the facts of the case were as everyone agreed they were, that Colonel Fancy's order was lawful, and that Levy had said and written the words ascribed to him. Colonel Brown, the law officer, ruled that the truth of the statements was immaterial, as was evidence of their effect. As a matter of fact, Howard Levy was not much of a subversive. No one became disaffected or disloyal. Shusterman did, however, have to prove Levy's intent to commit his crimes, but the court was permitted to draw its conclusions on that matter from the circumstances of the case, and from the pattern of Levy's political behaviour.

Colonel Fancy was first on the stand, reciting softly and with no feeling the tribulations of life in the hospital with a trouble-making pinko. During much of his long testimony, he stared at the thin red carpet beneath him. The men on the court seemed sympathetic; no officer likes to be disobeyed. Levy's civilian counsel, Charles Morgan, Jr, tried to establish from the succession of aidmen who followed that they were essentially combat soldiers, not medics. Some carried Red Cross insignia on their ID cards, and some did not. The point was never established.

The first indication that Levy was not alone in his concern about complicity and responsibility at the Fort Jackson hospital came in the testimony of another Brooklyn Jewish doctor named Ivan Mauer. Levy had once told him: 'You're no better than the rest. You're in sympathy with me, but you want to walk the tightrope.' At last, Captain Mauer got off the tightrope. He was not teaching aidmen at present, he said, and he would not participate in the programme if he were assigned. There seemed to

be a small 'doctors' revolt' brewing. A Negro ophthalmologist (who in the thousandth irony of the case was treating the wounded one-eyed major on the court) testified for Levy that he had serious doubts about training aid-men. He compromised with his scruples by merely letting the students look over his shoulder as he worked, with no formal instruction. He told the law officer he was afraid to say even that much, for fear of prosecution.

Morgan had begun the defence's case with a battery of character witnesses – Levy's father, Negro civil rights workers – and was admittedly creating 'an aura of Nuremberg' when the law officer interrupted. If Morgan wanted seriously to invoke the Nuremberg defence – that soldiers have a duty not to obey orders to commit war crimes – then he had to prove that the U S was following 'a general policy or a pattern or practice' of war crimes in Vietnam. Morgan was stunned. 'Give me an extra day,' he asked Colonel Brown, half seriously.

Morgan actually had five days, but the task was hopeless from the start. For tactical and political reasons (for example, dissension within the American Civil Liberties Union, for which Morgan is Southern Regional Director), he decided to limit his testimony to criminal actions by the small Special Forces contingent in Vietnam. That eliminated evidence of saturation bombing, napalming, and genocide. A platoon of ACLU lawyers and staff assistants flew into Columbia from New York, accompanied by scores of new reporters. There were rumours of famous witnesses on the way – Sartre, Bertrand Russell, leaders of the N L F. At the end, there were only three: Robin Moore, the author of *The Green Berets*; Donald Duncan, the *Ramparts* editor who had served in the Special Forces himself and had told all in a magazine article; and Peter Bourne, a British-born U S Army

psychiatrist just back from a study tour in a Special Forces camp in Vietnam.

Moore was never actually a Green Beret. He was a Sheraton Hotels P R man who went through Special Forces training to write his book ($3\frac{1}{2}$ million copies sold), and has not yet gone back to the P R business. He was embarrassingly chummy on the stand ('no sweat', he told the judge, and he called the Montagnards 'Yards' – which indeed was kinder than a prosecution witness who called the Viet Cong 'Luke the Gook'). But, like Duncan after him, he did provide some grisly tales of the tactics of Special Forces when they are done winning the hearts and minds of the natives. No one seemed particularly moved. Moore, Shusterman, and Colonel Brown kept chatting about the cheapness of life in the Orient, the superstitions of the Vietnamese, and the exigencies of war.

Peter Bourne provided the most convincing testimony about the way in which the Special Forces turn over prisoners to the South Vietnamese, to torture them as they please. The US maintains no prisoner-of-war camps, and 'military necessity' demands the transfer to the South Vietnamese. Under the rules of war, military units that take prisoners are responsible for their well-being, but none of the testimony satisfied the law officer. He ruled the next day that a case for war crimes as a policy had not been made, and he did not allow the testimony of 'isolated incidents' to go before the full court.

Nuremberg Day was followed by Ethics Day. The defence went back to its original line, that Colonel Fancy's order to Levy need not have been obeyed if it was contrary to the principles of medical ethics – that is, the rules against teaching medicine to those who will not practice it ethically. Three physicians (Victor Sidel of Harvard,

Louis Lasagna of Johns Hopkins, and Benjamin Spock of everywhere) and a non-physician faculty member at Harvard, Jean Mayer, testified lucidly about the role of ethics in a physician's life. Shusterman tried to get them to admit that whatever good the Special Forces aidmen might do in Vietnam justifies their military role, or at least is distinct from it. But they would not buy his cheerful pluralism. The aidman's role is inextricable from the war policy. The aidmen and the pacification teams and the winners of peasants' hearts and minds do not make war any better; they merely make it (possibly) more complete, more effective, more legitimate.

Shusterman produced a physician from Duke Medical School to refute the defence's experts. Doctors may train 'paramedical personnel', the witness said, but they need take no responsibility for what the paramedics do with their training. But the most frightening witness of all was Major Craig Llewellyn, a thirty-year-old Special Forces physician, who ran the programme in Vietnam for a year-and-a-half and now directs training at the John F. Kennedy Special Warfare Center at Fort Bragg, N.C. Llewellyn arrived in paratroop boots and an open shirt, his head shaved almost bald and his manner something like a karate instructor's. With cold passion, he argued that the Special Forces are the best thing that ever happened to Vietnam, or any other counter-insurgency situation, for that matter. The aidmen bring modern medicine to areas that know only 'Chinese doctors' – 'neither Chinese nor doctors'. Llewellyn's case was as strong as any Calvinist missionary could ever have made, and with precisely the same logic. He proclaimed the new doctrine of participatory imperialism – let the people decide to accept American intervention. The court was impressed, and Shusterman rested the prosecution's rebuttal.

No one could reasonably believe that the court martial would not convict Levy. Aside from the disadvantages of military procedure and the rather disorganized if often brilliant defence, there was simply too much at stake for the Army. Levy was a symbol of anarchy and wilfulness.

But at the motel in Columbia where the defence lawyers, Levy and his family, and most of the press hung out, there was a disturbing kind of euphoria. The out-of-towners were isolated and distracted by the strangeness of the small southern capital and the other-worldliness of the Army base. More than that, they had developed a sympathy – for many a commitment – to Levy for which there were no appropriate forms of expression. In civil rights, marches and peace demonstrations, the committed can shout and stomp and wave banners. If they like, they can make faces or fists at hostile segregationists or pro-war hecklers. But there was no visible enemy to be angry at in Columbia. The substitute was a bizarre, compulsive hilarity. There were gags and songs and cocktails late into the night. Levy joined in as thoroughly as anyone; his parents looked somewhat baffled, but did not leave the scene. No one really could leave. The motel was like some moored ship carrying a cargo of doomed but laughing passengers.

The party began to wear thin in the last few days. Capt. Charles Sanders, a quiet southern Army lawyer, serving as Levy's military counsel, was wrenched out of shape. He had started the case as a routine assignment. By the time it was over, he had to question his values, his background, his deepest sense of himself. Levy's act seemed to touch Sanders directly, at the same personal level on which it was made. Morgan had been working hard on the case for six months, and he was utterly involved and completely

worn, but he managed to pull the pieces of the case together for a moving and masterly summation. Where it touched the law was not entirely apparent. But it was so painfully personal and so profoundly felt that even the court may have been moved to mercy.

'Events occur in the life of the world that are irrational, and the reason that they occur is that good men don't stop them,' Morgan said. He is a great whale of a man, rumpled and sweaty at the slightest exertion, and he ranged around the small courtroom, talking without a script. 'This case shouldn't be here. Dr Levy shouldn't even be in the Army. Some place down the line, there was a place for this to stop, but it didn't. Now it's your responsibility to stop this thing as it monumentally cascades on to some crazy wild conclusion.'

Morgan knew how things get out of hand. He had been a lawyer in Birmingham, Ala, in 1963 when he spoke – tentatively at first – against white racism. He was forced to leave the state.

'Men are constantly being fitted into structures and sometimes they conform and sometimes they don't. Sometimes men become martyrs by inadvertance, and around them swirl great movements. I don't want a martyr. I want acquittal and we're entitled to it and the Army will not fall if Levy goes free.'

'More lives have been taken for heresy and witchcraft than for all the crimes in human history. More people have been tried for crimes that do not exist than for those which exist. Men are constantly put on trial for their minds and words. Your whole lives are involved in the context of freedom; true patriotism involves a man's right to dream and believe and think and speak and act. This trial has to do with free men and responsibility. I truly do not want a martyr. I want a free man.'

The court did not oblige. Levy was found guilty on the

three major charges, and of a slightly less serious offence on the two counts arising from the letter to Hancock. Shusterman seemed to be having some last-minute doubts about his severity; he asked for a dismissal of those two charges, and Colonel Brown agreed. The next morning Levy was sentenced. As the court rose, Col Chester Davis – the hospital executive officer now cured of the dry spot on his buttocks – took Levy by the arm and pushed him into a chair. Flushed and trembling, Davis pulled a pair of silver handcuffs from his pocket, fumbled awkwardly, and clasped them around Levy's wrist. The lawyers shouted, Trina Sahli cried, and Levy started moving through the door. He had a most peculiar smile on his face, which was captured in all the news photos – something between sorrow and contempt, but for whom it was not possible to tell.

The Trial of Captain Levy – 2

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On a bright day in early November, I returned to Fort Jackson, S C, for a visit with Capt. Howard Levy, who was then still detained in the prison ward of the hospital in which he had served as an Army doctor for almost two years. He had been a prisoner since 3 June, when a court-martial sentenced him to three years 'at hard labour' for refusing to train Special Forces medical aidmen, and for inspiring 'disaffection' among enlisted men. That day, he was led in handcuffs from the small Post court-room and put in the stockade; he was transferred to the detention ward the next day when the Army realized that Levy in irons did more damage to its image than Levy in comfort would do to its security. Since then a series of somewhat frenetic legal manoeuvres to free him on bail – or failing that, to keep him at Fort Jackson – had ended in failure, and Levy and his lawyers supposed that he would soon be removed to the US Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, for the remaining thirty months of his sentence. So it was, probably, a last visit for the duration of his term; at Leavenworth, Levy would be allowed to see only his lawyers and a short list of relatives and intimate friends.

In May, I had arrived at the Columbia, S C, airport on a midnight flight with a cadre of lawyers, legal P R men, and reporters. We swarmed into town in a fleet of rent-a-cars and camped out with the rest of the Levy entourage at a huge motel built in the Waikiki-Antebellum style. For two weeks the trial unfolded as a kind of morality

pageant with a Brechtian *mise-en-scène*: circus clowning, flowing booze, running gags, shackings-up, and puttings-down. We moved through the town and the base like actors in street theatre, using the surroundings as props, alienating the audience, and playing only to ourselves. Through it all, the moral – the commitment of a man, the confusion of a generation, the agony of the times – bounced and bumped against the surface action, until at the end it emerged almost too clearly by comparison.

In November there was no theatre in the streets of Columbia, no way of shutting out the depressing surroundings. Objectively, the town was in all ways unchanged, give or take a new A & W Root Beer stand or a McDonald's Golden Arches. But for us (I was with another journalist and an American Civil Liberties Union lawyer) it was all different. Columbia was no longer a prop, but a completed universe; it shut *us* out, isolated us, made our visit a marginal event, while the first time it had seemed central. It was like walking through an Alabama county the day after a civil rights march passed by, or visiting a college campus in the summer after one's own graduation.

That sense of isolation, or something close to it, was with Howard Levy at Fort Jackson in the years before the pageant arrived, and it reclaimed him – despite his efforts – when everyone left. Levy could have visitors without limit, and a few came or phoned (he had an incoming line) almost every day. But it was of course a life apart that he was forced to live, and the personal relations he built from his cell were necessarily partial. To the local radicals and political activists, he was the guru; for the scattered G I's at the Post who dared make or continue friendships with him, Levy was a moral (emotional?) in-

spiration. He would hardly admit the existence of his former colleagues. Dr Ivan Mauer, who admired but could not emulate Levy's defiance, came often to the prison ward. At first, Levy filled each visit with brutal assaults on Mauer's caution and failure to share his protest. Then anger cooled to contempt, and Levy simply ignored the other doctor. Mauer would come and read a newspaper and slip out without a word of conversation; his wife brought gifts of food, which failed to appeal to Levy's appetite.

Col Henry Fancy, the commander of the hospital, who brought the original charges against Levy, wandered in during the first few weeks of his confinement. 'You should get something light to read to take your mind off your troubles,' he advised Levy. During the Arab-Israeli war, Colonel Fancy sought Levy's political interpretation; the Colonel always made good use of his officers' talents. Col Chester Davis, the hospital executive officer, who manacled Levy that day in the courtroom and hustled him to the stockade, came later to make his courtesy call, but Levy would not see him. No doubt the Post officers were put off by Levy's uncompromising attitude; but then they could never comprehend his refusal of complicity in the system which he loathed and they accepted. For that matter, neither could many of his friends. One sympathetic journalist reported Levy's behaviour each day of the trial as a case study in manic-depressive syndrome. Even Levy's father, somewhat less clinically, whispered once in an aside, 'Why couldn't he have held out just a few more months?'

I had heard the stories of Levy's first months in prison, and I approached the hospital that morning with some apprehension, and a feeling – as we walked the long

wooden corridors toward the ward – almost of regret that I had come. Some of that ambivalence, which the three of us felt, was a version of the familiar personal dread and self-consciousness which people have when they visit a dying relative or a hopeless cripple. But now there was a threat of a different quality: an impending judgement, even if it were never articulated, of the existential failure: Mauer-ism. The corridors were impossibly long, or so they seemed to be, and branches led off in all directions without sign or explanation. We kept losing our way in the maze and had to ask for help several times. The last person we found – a serious and respectful young G I – set us pointing right, and, as we began walking, he added, not really as an afterthought, ‘Good luck!’

The day with Levy was not nearly so awkward as I had feared. He was the only prisoner in the ward, which was filled with unused, stacked-up hospital beds, and guarded – not very convincingly – by two M Ps. (One evening, Levy told us, he had found the outside guard asleep, and saw that he could easily unlatch the screen door to the ward and leave the grounds. ‘I toyed with the idea of going into Columbia for the night, and then reappearing the next morning, just to embarrass them,’ he laughed. ‘But I went back to bed instead.’) Levy had not yet been stripped of his rank, and the guards were dutifully deferential to a member of the officer class. They all watched television together. Levy’s own ‘cell’ was a narrow screened-off room; there were political posters on the wall and an array of books and magazines in a large shelf: ‘Skin’, Styron, the *Monthly Review*.

The weather was fine and warm, and we sat all afternoon in a screened porch. For a long time, we talked about the war, the strategy of protest, and the condition of the Peace Movement. Two shy black girls came to visit,

and then, at the end of the day, four white students from the University of South Carolina. The students had been to the Pentagon on 21 October – some had been arrested – and they were planning further political action at home. Levy suggested that they begin with moderate programmes to attract middle-class support, but he told them sternly that if they were going to pass out leaflets or hold peace vigils in the adult community they would have to modify their hippy appearance. They seemed unconvinced by the tactical advice, but obviously awed by Levy himself. 'I know I'm hard on them,' Levy said later. 'They're good kids. But I don't have much time, and I've got to use the position I've got with them.'

From the prison ward, Levy was conducting an impressive organizing effort in Columbia. He had used the authenticity of his condition to set up anti-war groups at the University and in the community – a large delegation had gone to the Pentagon – and he was 'working' on a slum organizing project in a section of town called Black Bottom. There was already an embryonic resistance movement on the Post which drew both inspiration and leadership from Levy. He hoped, most of all, to reactivate a civil rights newspaper called *Contrast*, which he had put out himself in 1966 (it was his civil rights work which had aroused the suspicions of Army Intelligence, and had convinced Colonel Fancy that Levy was a 'Communist').

As we were going, Levy began to talk about his expectations of Leavenworth. He had thought about 'non-cooperation', but he was not sure what that meant for him, or how he would react to actual conditions. But he knew he could not play the Army's game. 'The whole point, of course, is castration – to rob soldiers and prisoners of their manhood and their identity, their pride,' he said. 'Sex deprivation in prison is the most

blatant tactic for that,' he added, 'and if they can take away your manhood, they can do anything with you they want.'

I left the hospital quite unsure of what I felt about Levy and the meaning of his trials – the one in May and the others since and to come – and about myself, as a journalist who wrote about it, a friend (although distant), and a minor political actor. Levy of course was a star; supporting players must always be blinded by the glare.

We flew North by way of Atlanta. On the short leg of the trip from Columbia, we sat with a Navy pilot who had been stationed on the carrier *Kearsarge* in Asian waters, and was on his way back to Vietnam after a brief time at home. He kept kneading his flat-top hat as if it were a soft cap, and it was wet in his hands. From time to time, he would jump up from his seat and roam the aisle of the plane. Soon he began talking with the other writer in our group, who was sitting next to him. He had no idea of who she was, or who we were, or where we had been that day. He talked about the war, and there must have been a slight suggestion in the conversation that we were politically interested. 'I suppose you and your friends are against the war,' he said to the other writer. 'We are,' she answered. 'How would you feel if you were out there risking your life, and your buddies were getting killed, and the people back home didn't support you?' he asked. 'That's why we're against the war,' she said. They talked a little while longer, and he said that he had been to William and Mary, he was a Catholic, his father was a Foreign Service officer, and he was in the States to visit his wife. And then he said what was obvious from the very beginning, although none of us wanted to hear it. 'You know,' he said, 'I'm terribly afraid.' He got off before us, but we caught sight of him again briefly in the Atlanta

terminal, boarding another plane, and we waved good-bye with a slight gesture that I do not think he saw.

A light plane came for Levy one day just before Christmas, and took him to Leavenworth. On the day of his departure, several of his friends or supporters at Fort Jackson - no one knows how many, but some say hundreds - planned to 'see him off'. But the Post commanders confined them all to their barracks or work stations, and Levy's send-off party consisted only of officials. There was a good deal of banter all around, and Levy was characteristically sarcastic and funny. The last and best line was the Provost-Marshal's, who admitted that he disagreed with everything Levy said, but would defend to the death his right to say it.

Unfortunately, the Provost-Marshal's premise is not shared by the boards and courts of justice which have reviewed the case so far. Levy's lawyers argue that he had a Constitutional right to speak against the war, inside the Army as well as out, and that his refusal to train aidmen for Vietnam service was protected by rights of conscience and medical ethics. The appeal process is complex and, at least on the lower levels, almost hopeless. Neither military boards nor federal civilian courts are likely to overturn decisions of military justice in time of war. An injunction to stop the court-martial before it began was denied in successive civilian courts. The appeal for bail was refused through the military and civilian process, and the Supreme Court has denied a hearing on the issue. On the substance of the charges themselves, appeals for dismissal or reduction of the sentence have been turned down by a variety of officials, and they are now under consideration by the Military Board of Review. After that, the case can go to the Court of Military Appeals, and

then to the civilian courts, on the lowest level. Most, if not all, of Levy's sentence will probably have been served by the time the final appeal is heard. Possibly, Levy can get six months off his term as 'good time', but that is a discretionary matter and it is difficult to predict the manner in which discretion in the Army will be exercised.

Levy shares quarters at Leavenworth with a half dozen other officers – a forger, a black marketeer, but no other frankly political criminals. Watching television coverage of the Têt offensive Levy seemed rather pleased by the success of the guerrillas, and two of his cellmates threatened his life. Levy remains unconcerned, although he is a bit apprehensive at the prospect of his next cellmate – a Green Beret officer convicted of murdering a Vietnamese civilian. Levy never had many kind words for the Green Berets (although the accuracy of one of his indictable statements – that Special Forces men were 'murderers' – is now proved). He has applied for work as a physician at the prison, but action has not yet been taken on his request. Other prisoners with special qualifications are usually allowed to use them. As an alternative, Levy volunteered to teach American history at the prison school; that seemed acceptable, the Director of Custody said, if Levy would teach 'facts, not his opinion'. 'Fine,' Levy agreed.

A visitor who saw Levy shortly after his arrival reported that he had found the first week severely dislocating; the 'depersonalization' which he had expected was still shocking when it began. Levy's hair was cut, he had his regular clothes exchanged for a prison uniform, and the privileges of reading, seeing outsiders, and writing letters were drastically cut. Prisoners at Leavenworth are allowed five correspondents, who are also the only five

permitted visitors. Four of those on Levy's list live on the East Coast, and are effectively out of visiting range. Letters to him seem to be passed or returned on an arbitrary basis; letters from close friends have been sent back, but a large quantity of hate-mail gets through. He was told at first that he could receive a certain number of publications, but when he specified his choices, the officials said that some were not on the 'approved' list. *Ramparts* and the *New Republic* were banned; the *New York Times* and *New York Review* were allowed.

One prison psychiatrist, a young doctor serving his two years in the Army, offered Levy work in his mental health department and, incidentally, a chance to read his own subscription copy of *Ramparts*. Levy was unmoved by the offer. The psychiatrist, he thought, put on liberal airs while functioning as a crucial part of the system of authority. Psychiatrists sit on disciplinary and review boards, and in the name of therapy act as part of the judicial and controlling process. For the psychiatrist as well as the commandant, the chief virtue of a prisoner is his capacity for 'adjustment'. Both their jobs are to induce docility. When Levy objected to that use of medicine, another psychiatrist promptly diagnosed him as pathologically hostile, passive-aggressive, and paranoid. 'He thinks I'm paranoid,' Levy wrote in a letter, 'because I call him the enemy.' The inimical quality is Mauer-ism, and Levy has the radical perception - or ill-luck - to see it in all its incarnations.

Levy's only major confrontation with the prison authorities occurred during the initial depersonalization period, when an M P guard entered his room at midnight and turned on the light. Levy wanted it off, and said that prison rules gave him the right of the luxury of darkness. The guard remained steadfast; Levy called him a 'neo-

fascist'. Levy was reprimanded, but when the guard repeated the light-torture, Levy repeated his accusation. This time, the commandant found him guilty of disobedience and sentenced him to two weeks in solitary confinement on 'bread and water'. Then the sentence was suspended.

There is a certain amount of freedom within the prison, and Levy spends his days talking with enlisted men. The Fort Hood Three are at Leavenworth, and in all, Levy says, there are about forty 'political prisoners', although the Army classifies most of them as A W O Ls or puts them in other non-political categories. In a way, Levy now sees his role as an organizer, and he has told his few visitors that he thinks 'inside' political organizing in the Army can be effective.

'Outside', the effect of Levy and his trial on particular political developments is difficult to assess. At Fort Jackson, a nucleus of Levy's friends began open anti-war activity in January, and in a month's time they were strong enough to move from town onto the base for a protest 'meditation' service at the chapel. About thirty soldiers appeared, but before it began, Col Chester Davis called in one of the leaders and ordered him to cancel the meeting, or 'you will end up in prison like Dr Levy.' The soldier reluctantly obeyed (for his troubles, he has been denied a minor promotion), but two others who came refused to leave the chapel grounds and fell to their knees in 'prayer'. M P's dragged them off, and Colonel Fancy brought charges. Charles Morgan, Levy's flamboyant A C L U lawyer, took their case, and the sky at Fort Jackson grew dark with chickens coming home to roost. Signs went up on bulletin boards: 'Morgan's Back'. Finally, Colonel Fancy dropped the charges. Attempts at more 'pray-ins' have been made, but the authorities have

managed to break them up. They have also been able to frighten away some original supporters, but the protest effort seems to be growing. 'Levy is spiritually responsible for it all,' a political activist in Columbia reported recently. 'He single-handedly turned on the half-dozen people who started it all down there. It's the best example of direct personal organizing I've ever seen.'

Away from the Post, the activities which Levy generated or encouraged continue in a less dramatic way. A nucleus of activists was created during and after the trial, and separately if not together they will go on working. Around the country, the pray-in 'movement' spawned at Fort Jackson is spreading to other military camps; there was a similar demonstration last month in Fort Ord, Calif. There are also a few more cases of individual resistance like Levy's. Air Force Capt. Dale Noyd has just been sentenced to a year in prison at Clovis Air Force Base, N M, for refusing to train airmen for Vietnam. A private at Fort Dix, N J, applied for conscientious objector status and, when it was denied, refused to wear his uniform. He has been sentenced to a year at Leavenworth. A lieutenant at Shaw Air Force Base, S C, refused to assist in training for the war and has also been convicted and sentenced. Perhaps a dozen other cases of overt resistance have been tried in the past eight months.

I thought at the time of the trial, and see more clearly now, that Levy was as much a metaphor for a generation as a political leader. He 'turns people on' not by the force of his arguments (which have grown more sophisticated with his prison reading and reflecting) but by the power of his example. Everyone who was at the trial was touched in some way; many came to see that their perceptions of their lives were profoundly changed. Of course that

happened in the context of the war and a society in crisis, but Levy supplied the live model. An Army doctor who testified in the trial found himself increasingly bound up with Levy and has become a working political activist. A lawyer who helped with the defence realized in the months after the trial that his own association with liberal causes and action never extended to the roots of his existence, and he is undergoing a painful, and probably unresolvable, re-evaluation of his life. Capt. Richard Shusterman, the cool young prosecutor who did more than his duty in arguing against Levy (he added two charges to the case), has recently ended his Army service; together with his assistant at the trial, he is reported to be 'pretty much against the war'. Shusterman has joined a Philadelphia law firm. His former assistant is now an anti-poverty lawyer in Florida. Neither has yet had public second thoughts about Levy. Col Earl V. Brown, the law officer ('judge') at the trial, suffered a mild change of heart. He has left the Army to become assistant dean of the Columbia University law school; in February, he signed an advertisement published in the *Times* calling for an end to the war. 'We believe that the terrible violence the war is inflicting on the people of Vietnam is destroying the society we seek to protect. ... We believe that the US cannot by *acceptable* means succeed in its attempt to secure and maintain control of the Saigon government,' the ad said. In May, Colonel Brown had denied the existence of any 'pattern or practice' in the US conduct of the war which was *unacceptable* to generally held moral standards.

Levy's example extends to medical students (who are being organized in one of the most energetic radical movements in the country) and doctors (several – led by Dr Spock – visited him in Fort Jackson in November)

and others across the spectrum of political action. But most of all, it has an impact on those who are most like him in age and class and social role - the 'generation of the Fifties' that exists in confused transition between the security of liberal careerism and the support of the radical movements. Burt Austen, a biomedical engineering researcher at Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn (where Levy was trained), lived on that margin, and what has happened to him in the last half-year seems to represent the experience of others.

'Last summer, an ACLU man spoke at Downstate about the Levy case, and I became quite interested,' Austen told me not long ago. 'I talked with him for two hours or so after the meeting, and before long I was volunteering for work on the "Committee for Howard Levy, MD". We had a demonstration in Times Square on Hiroshima Day, and in November we went to Fort Jackson. I more or less organized it. It was really the first time I had done anything like that - for years my wife and I looked at TV and she said we shouldn't pay our taxes, but I just scoffed at her. What happens can be very strange. When we went down to visit Howard, he told us not to waste our time on him, but to do more. Do more. He even told Spock he wasn't doing enough. I think it made me do more, sort of reflect on what I had done up to that point.

'Most people take the attitude, "it can't happen to me". When I met Howard I realized I knew so many people like that in Brooklyn where I grew up. I realized that it didn't take much to be there; I mean circumstances could have placed any one of us in that stockade. The more each person does, the more he can't stop, the more he has to see it through to the end. I ran a press conference for the doctors at Fort Jackson; I never thought I could do it,

but then when I did it, I said, well, I can do it again. I felt in thirty-six years I had not really matured, and then in six months I came of age. I can't really look at things the way I used to. Sometimes a person comes in via the back door and before he knows it he finds himself organizing without really knowing what happened to him. You see, the more you do the more you have to do.'

The Future-Planners

New Republic 25.2.67

*While you and i have lips and voices which
are for kissing and to sing with
who cares if some oneeyed son of a bitch
invents an instrument to measure Spring with?*

– e. e. cummings from *Is 5*

With the growth of the complexity of society, immediate experience with its events plays an increasingly smaller role as a source of information and basis of judgement in contrast to symbolically mediated information about these events. . . . Numerical indexes of phenomena are peculiarly fitted to these needs. – Albert D. Biderman from *Social Indicators and Goals*

An editor of *Fortune* calls it 'the greatest advance in the art of government [in] nearly a hundred years'. Michael Harrington says it is 'one of the most radical suggestions put forth by a responsible body in our recent history'. An anti-poverty official in Virginia fears it is the road to 'a full-fledged socialist state'; a socialist teacher in Chicago fears it is not. Tom Hayden, the organizer in Newark, calls it 'a new barbarism'.

What 'it' is that so excites some and horrifies others turns out to be not one thing – or at least nothing for which there are words or concepts in common usage. Rather it is a collection of vaguely related political and intellectual happenings that have to do with new ways to analyse, anticipate, and control the social environment. Involved are elements of old-fashioned central planning and new-fangled futurism; but the participants are more than planners and less than utopians. They are a new

genus of social actors, something between politicians and technicians. For the most part, they do not want to push the buttons of the computerized society themselves; they are not technocrats. Instead, they would like to tell whoever is in charge which buttons to push. They dream of using social science instead of pressure politics to solve the nation's problems. Professor Bertram Gross of Syracuse, one of the few men in the business who tries to relate all the happenings into a coherent social movement, calls the new breed 'technopols'. But a simpler definition describes what they do: plan for the future.

Future-planning is in many ways the most fascinating, and certainly the most fashionable thing to be doing this year in both government and the social sciences. There are a dozen or so public and private panels, task forces, editorial boards, and seminars engaged in it. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare has quietly assembled a technopol pool under Assistant Secretary William Gorham and the Columbia University sociologist, Daniel Bell, to explore the possibilities of a 'social State of the Union' report. The American Academy of Arts and Sciences has two future-planning projects under way: a 'Commission on the Year 2000' (the work will be published in *Daedalus*), and a shorter-term panel on the year 1976. The American Academy of Political and Social Science will publish two special issues of its *Annals* this year on 'Social Goals and Indicators for American Society', and the chapters are being discussed this winter in a series of seminars conducted around the East Coast by Bertram Gross. The new planners have an international network: the UN runs a small future-planning operation in Geneva. Last year, future-planners from several countries met in London to set up a continuing project called 'Mankind 2000'. In Washington, a World

Future Society is in the process of formation. Hundreds of private profit-making and non-profit companies and foundations, taking off from the R A N D idea, are in the future-planning game.

'It's an idea whose time is coming,' former Assistant Secretary of Labor Daniel P. Moynihan said recently. Politicians of the more conventional stripe are beginning to see a wave in the future. Democratic Senators Harris of Oklahoma and Nelson of Wisconsin have bills in Congress seeking federal support, in one way or another, for future-planning. But the biggest political boost came earlier this month when Senator Walter Mondale of Minnesota introduced legislation to set up a Council of Social Advisers in the White House, authorize an annual 'Social Report' to the President, and establish a Joint Social Committee of Congress to oversee the whole thing.

The Administration is intrigued by all the activity, but cautious lest public opposition develop before a lobby for future-planning can harden its lines. 'Planning' still evokes fears of creeping socialism or rampant New Dealism (although most future-planners are ideologically distinct from both doctrines), and both the regular politicians and the technopols keep their eyes trained on the right for signs of attack. But the idea remains attractive. 'If the war on poverty turned out to be money without progress,' a sociologist said the other day, 'this could be progress without money.' Presidential Assistant Douglas Cater is the liaison with the future-planners, but he is not over busy with the task. By and large, future-planning is still directed at the Administration, not by it.

If the technopols have their way, that will not always be the case. They assume that government must increasingly

intervene to reform the social structure. But they see that the government is unable either to define its social goals or evaluate its performance in any scientific way. Definition and evaluation are inextricable. For an example, there are no reliable statistics on crime in the US; the FBI totals illustrate the basic law of statistical method – feed ‘garbage’ into computers and you get ‘garbage’ out. There is no way of telling whether methods of prevention and correction do any good, and no idea at all of the precise relationship of presumed ‘causes’ to crime. In effect, the government has no concept of what the ‘crime problem’ is, and, at least until publication of the National Crime Commission’s report, could develop no relevant anti-crime goals. ‘Making the streets safe’ and such statements are not considered goals at all, but idle wishes or subjective metaphors. A few measurements have been taken of crime, but no significant correlations have yet been drawn. The state of the art was classically described by Groucho Marx; leaning over Harpo’s prostrate form and groping for his pulse, Groucho declared, ‘Either he’s dead or my watch has stopped.’

An impressive body of economic indicators, goals, and models has been constructed to show the state of the nation’s economy and make policy objectives possible. The future-planners like to remind sceptics that it was not until economists measured unemployment that a distinct ‘unemployment problem’ was recognized, and goals set for its alleviation. Now, federal economists aim for certain levels of employment and use their indicators to rate success toward that end. The Council of Economic Advisers watches over a sophisticated set of national accounts, which give a fair picture of where the country stands in terms of prices, income, steel and car production, movement of goods, investment, construction and

the like. The economists use the data (weighted with their own ideas of what's good) to set economic goals. If things begin to go awry – if there are indications of inflation or an unemployment rise – the C E A will advise the President to take whatever steps he can to make the accounts come out even again.

But that is not always easy, and in fact even the economic indicators are inadequate (price indices do not take note of quality changes, for instance), the goals too obviously based on the economists' values, and the power to 'fix' the economy really rather slight. Sticky problems on which there is no consensus – such as the maldistribution of wealth – are left unfixed.

Nevertheless, to a race of underprivileged behavioural scientists, the status, influence and political power of the macro-economists are objects of consuming fascination and some envy. Economic data are *hard*; economic manipulation *works*. Would that the same could be said for psychology, sociology, political science and the rest. As tokens of their esteem, the behavioural scientists choose the terminology of economics and the 'harder' physical sciences and mathematics. They throw around phrases like input/output, feedback, entropy, synergism, symbiosis: as if by adopting the symbols of science they could achieve it.

But they know too that the emphasis on economic accounting in governmental planning has excluded crucial social considerations. There is altogether too much talk about Gross National Product and too little about happiness, culture, integration, participation. Bertram Gross calls the obsession with economic forces 'the new philistinism'.

Gross's hobby-horse is a national system of social accounting, in which aspects of the 'quality of life' would

be tallied along with the facts of the economy. Ways will be found to work with data on health, social relations, crime, aspirations, art and culture, conflict, mobility. In a long and difficult chapter in the anthology, *Social Indicators*, Gross outlines his ideas on the possibilities for social accounting. He concludes that it is an inevitable development.

Laymen may find social indicator prose rough going and the tables and diagrams unfathomable, but a popular statement of social accounting was made by Michael Harrington two months ago in *Harper's*. His formulation of social accounting is rather simple: translate social values into economic terms (or devise a common unit for social and economic values), list the benefits on one side of a ledger, and balance them off against the social and economic debits on the other side. Thus, on the sheet for 'highways' might be the benefits of mobility, convenience, supply and defence capability, employment in the construction trades, and so forth. On the debit side might be urban disruption, natural resource wastage, accident potential, car proliferation, and eyesore intensity. Anyone who has had a few years of the new maths should be able to tote up the figures and arrive at a national highways policy. What is so *different* about future-planning is its assumption that the lack of information and not the conflict of interests is at the bottom of society's problems. Some of the planners (Gross in particular) question that approach, but despite their arguments the overall effect of future-planning seems to downgrade the importance of conflict. What is so *new* is the expectation that methods will be devised to supply the needed information.

A Washington economist recently explained what social indicators were all about by reducing the notion

to an absurdity. He fantasized a scene in the Council of Social Advisers one day in the mid-1980s:

'Dan Bell is idly watching the Dow-Jones societal wire (formerly the business wire): "Consumer Indignation Index down .04 per cent. ... Black Power Ratio steady (two per cent drop in hair-straightener sales offset by two per cent rise in empty seats at Miriam Makeba concerts). ... Three youths from eastern Kentucky accepted at CCNY. ... Participatory Democracy Determinant drops slightly (collapse of an anti-fluoridation organization in West Texas). ... Gross Social Product extrapolated to 789 by 31 December."

'Suddenly Bell calls excitedly, "Mike, Bert, come here quick. The Native Restlessness Index has hit an all-time high!" The Advisers go into special session with their staff, then report their conclusions and recommendations to the President, who the next day asks Congress for emergency legislation to install a nation-wide network of plastic swimming pools. He activates the National Guard, and calls a White House Conference.'

Much of the appeal of social indicators comes from the obvious parallel with economic accounting. (Gross, as a young legislative assistant, helped draft the Employment Act of 1946 which set up the Council of Economic Advisers; he later served as its director.) There is a feeling among many radical and liberal reformers that no effective movement is likely to bring the kinds of change they want for the U.S. Harrington and a few others may see future-planning as a back door to democratic socialism; they cannot figure out how to get in by more overtly political means. But the diffuse background and predilections of the future-planners suggest that no common ground for a movement can be found. At one pole are the liberal and socialist humanists – Gross, Bell,

Moynihan, Harrington, Leon Keyserling – who are more or less conscious of the values they want the indicators to indicate. At the other are the RAND-y systems analysts who take more pleasure in piecing together puzzles. In the middle somewhere are government officials who want to rationalize the bureaucratic process and be 'effective'.

The historical springs of future-planning are similarly diffuse. It has much in common with Fabianism and Keynesian economics, although there is no model for the social structure to compare with Keynes' construct of the economy. There is certainly some relevance to the concept of technocracy and managerialism. There is actually very little pure utopianism, which is 'an absolute leap into the dark, the attainment of *the* one and only decent society – by people who have no power to bring it about', as one future-planner put it. Many of the new planners have been influenced by Bertrand de Jouvenal, the French political theorist who runs a social research institute called *Futuribles* (the name is a combination of *future* and *possible*). They also look to the urban planning experts who alone have physical models of 'the future' to contemplate. Computer technology is not absolutely essential to social accounting, but the excitement computers have generated probably stimulates the urge to collect data.

But the most direct antecedent is the systems-analysis experience which began in the Fifties and was brought to the government by Defense Secretary McNamara in the Sixties. A Pentagon planner fixed the origins of the 'corporate society' in the Korean War:

'Major funds began to pour into research and development, stimulating the aircraft, missile and electronic industries. The rapid changes in R and D found govern-

ment bureaucracy incapable of managing the complex weapons which technology declared possible, and the weapons system concept was born. The philosophy has spread throughout the economy.'

P P B S – planning-programme-budgeting-systems – flowed out from the Defense Department. Systems men set up the guts of the poverty programme. H E W took it over and put one of McNamara's whiz kids, William Gorham, in charge. But the systems approach is restricted to more or less fixed programmes – a Head Start, a weapons programme, a health project. And it is concerned mainly with the efficiency of the programme in economic terms – according to its pre-set objectives and values. Cost-effectiveness analysis will not indicate which Head Start organization in Mississippi gives Negroes a better sense of their community, which helps them share in politics, or which instils more dignity in the children. It will only tell which programme has more enrollees, disburses more money, and creates jobs.

Social indicators are of a different order. They are meant to quantify the intangibles of quality, and feed them into the accounting. They deal with longer-term societal trends, and lead more directly to policy goals. A social indicator system for Mississippi might find ways to quantify pride, power, and communitarianism, and so formulate objectives and measure performance. The recent Coleman report on the effects of discrimination in education was a partial model of what can be done with social indicators. But its field was narrow. The Moynihan report on 'The Negro Family' is a better example of the uses of social indicators of continuing trends.

Post-industrial society (as Daniel Bell calls the current managerial, white-collared, technological state of affairs)

creates the logic underlying future-planning. A case in point is the development of the supersonic transport. The fantastic size, the money, the time span, and the complex government and corporate interests involved in the project forced planners to think about the future – what things would be like ten or a dozen years hence when people would (or should) be hurtling around the world aboard an SST. On only slightly less complicated levels, the biggest corporations must postulate demands and needs far into the future. Will the US use so many billion barrels of oil in 1985? Then Standard Oil had better buy Honduras, while the price is right. Better still, a combine of the government and an oil consortium should buy Honduras, for the sake of super-rational planning and permanent stability.

The power that industry's own future-planners have is immense. In an important way they can make public policy without feeling responsible to a popular constituency. The aerospace industry has tens of thousands of R and D technicians busily making models of the future and dreaming up ways for their corporations to profit by its exploitation.

The analysts build their future-models, the companies fit their hardware to the models, the military men plan their strategies according to the available hardware, and the Administration chooses its foreign policy from the possible strategies. Along the way there may be some flexibility of choice: President Johnson can decide to go ahead with an anti-ballistic-missile programme, or not. But, by the time such choices are presented, many of the crucial alternatives have been eliminated. The R and D people at Lockheed, or wherever, have framed the key questions, even if they have not supplied the answers. Defence policies may be subject to some counter-

vailing public debate, but industry's policies – oil reserve development, say – rarely if ever come into public view.

As the biggest purchasing agent in the U S, the government has a special interest in seeing that its requirements are fulfilled. The Defense Department has dealings with some 17,000 subcontractors for its twelve weapons systems. Cost-accounting was obviously the only way to check on contract performance. But the 'contract state' now encompasses more than military work. Increasingly, government agencies contract out to provide social services – education, job training, health care. Performance in such areas cannot be measured in purely economic terms (although they currently are). Social indicators are needed to judge performance standards. The contract state can hardly exist without them. Defence corporations are already at work analysing the society's domestic needs, and trying to fit their production to them. James Ridgeway has pointed out in *New Republic* how large companies are thinking about such projects as 'new towns', which they would build and (perhaps) operate, for fun and profit. In California, a traditionally nervous aerospace industry has hedged against defence appropriations cuts by working up analyses of crime, pollution, transportation and Heaven knows what else, and selling both their models of the future and their plans for production to the state government. One company peered into its crystal ball and saw revealed an enormous number of Americans living at the water's edge (oceans, lakes, rivers, marinas, etc.) by 1990. It thereupon began to develop ways of producing or investing in the products the new race of amphibians will demand: boats, hydroponic gardens, waterproof paints, resuscitators, and the like. The future-planners can have it two ways: they can get in on the action early in a trend, and they can

accelerate it by simply watching it, and doing a little loose talk on the side. They can even create huge markets. One government future-planner notes that RCA invested some \$160 million in colour television simply to create the market for it. In the same kind of way, the aerospace industry and military technologists created the 'market' for the space race, by planning and producing the hardware.

But model-building of future societies (almost all the planners like to 'anticipate' a plurality of possible futures, rather than 'predict' one specific future state) is only part of the work. It is the most fun, but also the least responsible. The serious, 'scientific' future-planners are more concerned with the methods of developing social indicators, and the ways in which they will be used.

Here the most troublesome problems arise. First of all, there is precious little data available on the operation of the society in a non-economic way. As a consequence, men like Gross, Raymond Bauer (a Harvard Business School professor who edited *Social Indicators*), and their colleagues have to spend most of their time working out methods for taking measurements. The process leaves more action-minded social critics frustrated and confused. A recent discussion of the crime problem among social indicator people, for instance, dismissed the questions of prevention and causation and focused on correction, because no one has the foggiest idea of how to develop indicators for causes, much less how to work them into a social account. Would data on an urban freeway system – which accelerates the flight to the suburbs and thus solidifies ghettos – be an item in a social accounting of crime? The social accountants take such questions in their stride. The need for data is obvious, no one claims much expertise, and to oppose the science because of its

primitive methods is termed 'the new know-nothingism'. But it is harder for the future-planners to get off the hook on two fundamental problems their work raises: who will use the information collected, and for what purposes?

'Information is a core resource,' a New York sociologist said last week in a discussion of indicators. 'We've got to help countervailing groups use the information. We have it in economics, but not in the social sciences. There could be a government monopoly on information.' Professor Bauer tends to agree: 'The data are more likely to be used by people at the top of the structure,' he says. Gross points out that there is always conflict in social systems, and social accounting will not – and should not – eliminate such clashes. He sees the role of social accounting as an 'effort to restore human values to a central position in man's thought and action'.

There is no general agreement on 'human values'. But the people who frame the questions about the society and plan the future can easily, and unconsciously, inject their own values into the answers they receive. The Moynihan report was a good example. The assumption was that fatherless, mother-dominated families were a 'bad thing'. Information was collected about unemployment rates, the number of heads of households who were Negro females, education, delinquency, and other symptoms of pathology. The questions the surveyors asked were designed to find out how bad a thing it was. Such studies might be titled. 'The Negroes – and what to do about them.' The goals which could emerge from the collection of indicators would have to do with changing Negroes to make them conform to the model of a 'healthy' family member. There might be other ways to pose questions about the condition of Negroes – for example, what is so terribly wrong with a social structure that produces racism,

alienation, and gross inequality? But the policy implications of the answers to that kind of question might be too unsettling to consider. Moynihan's questions were certainly legitimate, and his data weren't at all inaccurate. The problem was that he and his fellow-surveyors were able to frame national thinking about race and poverty problems by their choice of questions. The danger is that government and corporate élites will monopolize the business of question-asking, and so manipulate the attitudes of the society they are pretending to serve as disinterested technicians.

Élitism seems to be built into the theory of social accounting. 'It is an establishment position,' Bauer says. 'It involves amelioration of the present system, but it assumes that the system can be made to work.' Future-planning serves the ideological needs of the 'corporate state' to maintain itself by the manipulation of reform: not so much as to change basic economic and political relationships, but enough to take care of immediate needs. The technopols are supposed to keep the balance.

In the Fifties, Daniel Bell (among others, many of whom are confirmed future-planners) proclaimed 'the end of ideology' in America, and predicted its demise in the West. The theory was that ideology arises from conflict, and serious conflict (class warfare and system-wide defects) is forever resolved in the U.S. Furthermore, the ideological model of Marxism is discredited, and radicalism is a dead letter. What problems remain to be solved are non-ideological, and could best be dealt with by intelligent, humanistic technicians. The systems analysts, the technopols, the future-planners filled the bill perfectly.

Max Ways, of *Fortune*, no modest propagandist for 'liberal corporatism', sees the future-planners' role as shifting 'the politics of issues to the politics of problems'.

Under their tutelage, business and government will prosper, and the level of national morality will climb. As proof, he shows how the Secretary of Defense has allowed the US to avoid the twin immoralities of escalation and withdrawal in Vietnam. 'McNamara, his systems analysts, and their computers are not only contributing to the practical effectiveness of US action,' Ways wrote, 'but raising the moral level of policy by a more conscious and selective attention to the definition of its aims.'

Ways, Bell, Moynihan, Harrington and others suggest, perhaps without realizing it, that there is a definite ideology of technical problem-solving. It would indeed be 'know-nothing' to batter down all attempts at data-collection and social accounting just to get at those ideological elements. Some of the formulators – Gross, Bauer, and Biderman – have no sharp axes to grind, and are open to arguments that their theories may be misused in practice. The 'corporate state', 'post-industrialism', 'the contract state' or whatever US society is coming to, already tends toward élitism and a kind of totalitarianism. 'The worst kind of dictatorship,' Bauer said not long ago, after an evening's discussion of social indicators, 'is the kind that gives people what they want, the kind in which you can't tell you're being controlled.' If that is one of the possible futures, it is too important to be left only to the planners.

The Big Fix

New York Review of Books 23.3.67

There are still many people – perhaps the majority of the politically sophisticated – who can rationalize C I A's involvement with private organizations as a necessary nastiness of democracy, and even a responsibility of patriotism. It all began in the early days of the cold war. Anti-communist 'democrats' kicked the reds out of the Democratic Party, the Congress of Industrial Organizations, and the American Veterans Committee. They formed the Americans for Democratic Action and the Liberal Party (in New York) as alternatives to communism for the Left. The National Student Association (N S A) served the same function.

Then the C I A moved in to oversee the students' foreign operations. It set up an anti-communist world student council, devised strategies for attacking the periodic pro-communist 'youth festivals', and in the meantime gathered information on tomorrow's foreign cabinet ministers (and opposition leaders) for the C I A's files. But for the most part the foreign activities were inept or insignificant, and their return for American 'security' practically non-existent. What was more important was what the habit of complicity did for American politics. Generations of students were trained in international relations 'seminars' conducted each summer by N S A alumni and C I A agents (the two were often synonymous). Those who learned their lessons well were then manoeuvred into the top places in the student organization at the annual conference. They were offered

power, money, deferment from military service, and the certainty of high status if they accepted the values of pragmatism, presentability, and the cold war. They would all have golden careers, and they all accepted. They were spies who came in for the gold.

Once complicit, they found to their surprise that the CIA was not the dirty right-wing, bomb-planting, wine-poisoning, coup-staging operation they expected. At least their CIA was clean; all during the Fifties it was, as one 'witting' student said, 'a haven from McCarthyism'. The 'agency's' policies were often quite opposed to official State Department policy. The CIA pushed an opening to the left in Italy while the official line was all for closing. CIA operatives worked for anti-colonialists in Africa (they once promoted Patrice Lumumba, of all people) while State was supporting the colonial powers. Administrations in Washington smiled on Latin-American dictators while the CIA plotted their assassination.

Of course, there was another CIA that the liberal students, the intellectuals (in the Congress for Cultural Freedom, among other groups) and the left-wing labour leaders never saw. It was busy overthrowing Arbenz in Guatemala and Mossadegh in Iran, discrediting (and occasionally bumping off) independent labour officials in Latin America, buying off editors, courts and governments here and there, and supporting right-wing groups discreetly isolated from the liberals' playthings. But the American Left – the wise and witting ones – had a feeling that there was a friend in the Bureau of Public Roads (the CIA cover building) in Langley, Virginia.

The effect of all this was to destroy all options for independent positions on foreign policy in the U.S. Everyone who went abroad for an American organization was, in one way or another, a witness to the theory that the

world was torn between communism and democracy, and anything in between was treason. That such an ideology was a grotesque abstraction from the realities of world politics is just now becoming clear. History will show that the origins and the conduct of the Cold War were infinitely complex; there are dirty hands all around the table. But the CIA's primary effort, both at home and abroad, was to perpetuate that ideology. And it did so not by the show of tyranny but by the exploitation of freedom.

The illusion of dissent was maintained: the CIA supported socialist cold warriors, fascist cold warriors, black and white cold warriors. The catholicity and flexibility of CIA operations were major advantages. But it was a sham pluralism and it was utterly corrupting. The CIA allowed Americans to work and travel abroad only because it had infiltrated their organizations and could manipulate them at will. They used the harmless ones for a show of magnanimity and sanitized the dangerous ones. Administrations (as Robert Kennedy said this week) approved of the whole procedure. And twenty years' worth of Americans were taught that to lie was the highest morality.

Much of the wave of anti-CIA feeling which followed the recent *Ramparts* exposé was sincere enough, but probably for the wrong reason. There is a widespread opinion that the main difficulty was the CIA's meddling in internal affairs. The problem is jurisdictional: spies at home work for the FBI, those abroad for the CIA. This kind of reasoning is not likely to lead to the kind of structural reforms that could change the role of intelligence services in the US government. Today the CIA is nothing more than a huge, international agency of subversion that cor-

rupts foreigners and Americans with equal insensitivity. It is far from the 'intelligence gathering and evaluating' operation its founders envisaged.

It is not hard to see how the young of this generation can be appalled. Their rage against the hypocrisy of the 'system' is the only appropriate reaction to the facts of the Fifties. But it is more difficult to believe that things will now change. In recent weeks there have been meetings of NSA officials with foundation officials to discuss the possibility of private grants to keep the organization alive. But it will not do much good to replace the CIA with funds from Ford or Rockefeller. The demands and pressures from the huge corporate foundations are little different from the CIA's. The 'partnership' of corporations and foundations with the government has produced a similarity of perceptions. Even if that were not the case, the NSA is a democratic mutant, a perversion of the rhetoric of the open society. It was built on the values of careerism, status, élitism, and manipulation. It ought to be disbanded at once. The only future for a free union of students lies in democratic organization, and it must rise from the campuses, not from a consortium of foundations in New York.

The CIA-corrupted students were all too willing to be corrupted. The Agency enticed them with implied promises of importance and power, with the opportunity for golden careers. All they had to pay was their independence. But in so paying they also lost their identity. Their experience parallels that of the foreign officials who sell their independence to the US for aid, or trade, or bases, or paper alliances, or whatever. What the NSA-CIA story made clear is that democracy at home and abroad is pre-empted by the operations of a trained, articulate, cohesive, liberal élite, financed and directed by the

U S government. The possibility for opposition based on fundamental disagreement and active resistance is precluded first by the penetration and finally by the control of seemingly independent organizations.

The C I A and all its allies, then, have been eminently successful. Congressional committees to watch the C I A's activities will be more than complaisant; they will be enthusiastic. In fact, the ideology of the C I A is now the overwhelming consensus philosophy. 'We used to make a distinction between "them" and "us",' an ex-student leader said sadly this week. 'Then we found out that it's all "us".'

Times' Square*

New York Review of Books 4.5.67

Governments lie; newspapers catch them. It's as simple as that, or should be, but somehow the game of political reporting has been invested with a set of rules that effectively impedes play. Editors identify with an elusive 'national interest', reporters cultivate confining and ultimately unproductive relationships with news sources, and readers demand an anaesthetic 'objectivity' as the price of credibility. And everyone, press and public alike, worries about who is influencing whom, and to what end. As the dean of American political reporters, James Reston must not only abide by those rules, but enforce them. He appears to welcome the task – performed implicitly in his thrice-weekly column in the *New York Times*, and now explicitly in this modest (by his own characterization) volume of lectures delivered last year unto the Council on Foreign Relations.

Reston on butcher-paper goes down smoothly. His columns are tightly structured: premise, argument, counter-argument, summary, with hardly a variation of subject. He never threatens his readers by brilliance or controversy; like them, he is just smart enough for his role. Or perhaps a bit smarter. He was once a sports columnist for the A P, and he is still the second-best sports writer in America writing about politics (Arthur Schlesinger must be the first). He writes evocatively about the mood of the crowd in the stands, the excitement of a summer after-

* *The Artillery of the Press: Its Influence on American Foreign Policy* by James Reston, Harper & Row, for the Council on Foreign Relations, 108 pp., \$3.95.

noon at the ball-park, the conversation in the dugout. He knows all the records and all the averages. If it is true, as an admiring old *Times* hand once said, that Reston's ideas, like his column, seem to end at 700 words, he at least has that form down to perfection.

Reston in hardback is less authoritative, and long before the 108th and final page of his book the thinness begins to show. His conception of the press and its function in America is not illiberal. Nor is it noticeably unconventional. As much as anything, it seems to be a compendium of every liberal cliché about the people's right to know, the reporter's responsibilities, and the government's duties. Like a city-room Polonius advising a cub, Reston neatly phrases the self-evident. The press should be independent ('the American assumption') rather than controlled ('the Soviet assumption'). It must be the critic rather than the instrument of government. Objectivity does not demand that reporters give equal weight to untruth and truth. A well-informed citizenry will produce more satisfactory solutions to social problems than any leader or élite. Analytical reportage is helpful and should be encouraged. Talented young men should be hired at once. Sensationalism distorts the news. Ideas should be reported along with events, causes with effects. The press cannot directly influence Presidential foreign policy very much these days. Television has changed our lives, in some ways for the better, in other ways for the worse.

There are a great many more nuggets in that vein. Although these maxims may be unexceptionable in themselves, they indicate a turn of mind and a pattern of assumptions that can account for the failure of daily journalism to serve as an independent force in the society. Independence is what the press proclaims and what it

lacks. In ways which journalists themselves perceive only dimly or not at all, they are bought, or compromised, or manipulated into confirming the official lies: not the little ones, which they delight in exposing, but the big ones, which they do not normally think of as lies at all and which they cannot distinguish from the truth.

It is easier to describe the system than to understand its fundamental dynamics. Reston talks about the more obvious pressures on journalists, particularly the huge Washington contingent. The wire services have to cater to such a disparate and dispersed audience that little opportunity is afforded for originality, analysis, depth of coverage, or controversialism. The 'tyranny of time and geography' encourages the 'flaming lead and the big headline.' Fear of reportorial imbalance leads many reporters to pass along as news 'anything a big shot said'. Beyond that, Reston says, the growth of the government as well as the expansion of the press corps militates against personal reporting and interviewing and makes necessary the big formal press conference and the flow of hand-outs.

There are other pressures, too, which may be subtle or not so subtle. The 'beat' system gives reporters a stake in the fortunes of their sources. Like it or not, newsmen become spokesmen for their beats. They mostly like it. A reporter who must continue to cover the War on Poverty is not going to antagonize his best sources by exposing the frauds and futility of their programmes. He will accept the top officials' perceptions of their work, and criticize only within narrow terms. A *Times* reporter may make trouble about a Head Start centre or a Job Corps camp, but he could not on his life report the whole anti-poverty show as a failed gimmick (which would not be difficult to

do). In the more totalitarian communities in Washington – the military and judicial establishments, to name two – beat reporting is almost indistinguishable from propagandizing. Scores of newsmen ‘cover’ the Pentagon, which means presenting its cases and causes to readers unsullied by analysis or criticism. Aside from a few stories per year on inter-service rivalries and Defense Department grievances against the President and Congress, no running critique of militarism can be found. Reporters might dig into the dealings of the Pentagon with private industry, the personal relationships between military men and friendly congressmen, and the influence of the defence establishment on areas (such as civil disobedience and race tensions) not generally thought to be of military concern. But reporters stick to their safe stories; for their caution, they get the open-door treatment, a few beers with the colonels, and a sense of swinging, having the inside dope. There is no overestimating the status value of inside-dopesterism – in a profession that gives few other symbols.

The judicial community is in some ways more closed than the military. Reporters may write brilliantly or banally about court decisions, but they invariably shy away from the important stories of judicial politics and the exercise of power outside the courtroom. Who influences whom on the Supreme Court, and to what end? What is Abe Fortas’s role in Washington politics? How do judges get promoted? There are a hundred stories worth reporting, and they are not to be found in hearing transcripts or briefs. But newsmen covering the courts soon take on the professional attitude of their subjects, which is that no one who hasn’t been to law school is even remotely capable of understanding legal problems, and in any case must be patronized if spoken to at all.

Furthermore, what goes on in the judges' chambers and lawyers' offices is not construed as a valid subject of public interest, much less a political issue. The journalists agree.

Every major newspaperman in Vietnam must accept the basic premises of US policy there, although he may carp, within limits, about this or that military tactic or one or another political move. Often the reporting is just bad. There was monumental misreporting of the 'build-ups' during the recent Têt truce, about the elections last year, about the work of the constituent assembly, about civilian casualties, about the conditions for negotiations, about the composition of the National Liberation Front, about the pacification programme. But more depressing has been the failure of good reporting – including much by the *Times's* able correspondents – to lead to logical conclusions about the nature of US foreign policy. The essential preconceptions somehow remain, and in turn colour the day-to-day reportage. For example, many reporters in Vietnam found out long ago that the war they were reporting was not a simple case of 'aggression from the North' as the Administration would have it. And yet none of them reports it as a civil war (in which there might be journalists sympathetic to both sides).

The crucial question is how reporters so mysteriously take on the ideological coloration of their surroundings. Reston is no help at all in articulating possible answers, but by indirection and unwitting example he suggests a great deal. Compare, for instance, these two fragments of an analysis of California politics:

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The New Left is not powerful in California, but in the last few years, with its provocative extremism, it has energized the conservative right.

The first is a verbatim quotation by Clark Kerr in the issue of *Newsweek* that was running through the presses on 29 January last. The second is Reston's own thoughts in his column in the *Times* of the same day.

The point is not that the similarity of language is at all shameful. One of the privileges of columnar journalism is the freedom from footnoting it confers on its practitioners. Reston says that journalists must indulge in 'compulsory plagiarism' to protect their sources. By the time Reston saw him in Berkeley, Kerr had apparently formulated a way of talking about his dismissal as president of the University of California; like a politician on the hustings, he repeated a set speech with only minor variations at each whistlestop. What is important (and seems so stark in juxtaposition) is Reston's total identification with Kerr's perception of the interplay of forces in California. Reston wrote from Berkeley. He could have interviewed any number of students, or teachers, or regents, or politicians who would have given different pictures of what was happening; and he may indeed have spoken to them all. Their perceptions would not necessarily have been more valid than Kerr's. But Reston, the dean of the responsible, liberal press, chose Kerr, the dean of responsible, liberal education.

Reston's role, like most working journalists, is to *feel* that responsibility. As reporters advance in their 'careers', they gravitate toward establishments, which reward them with compliments, power, jobs, and an over-all sense of security. Some become satellites around powerful men, justifying their orbits as paths to good sources, as part of the game. Officials read them speeches for approval be-

fore they are delivered, or take their little suggestions. The reporters get sucked in further. To his great credit, Reston has never been a crony of any politician. But he uses his power as a *Times*-man and his competence as a journalist to draw important people to him; the Cadillacs line up. He deals with important men, as with important issues, gently. He is trusted for his deference. Friends at the *Times* say that he will check back with sources in the morning if they have slipped stories to him the night before in an unguarded moment at a party. (Murray Kempton has a better rule: never quote a man unless you're sure he means what he's saying.) But it is not without some sacrifice that Reston has climbed to the top of the tree (he is the only newspaperman of his generation to be on the cover of *Time*.) He enrages no one and worries few.

Whether he changes anyone is another matter. He likes to think of himself as a teacher (or, his mother said in the *Time* cover story, a preacher), bringing people along to his point of view by gentle persuasion. But he probably succeeds only to the degree that the distance between his readers and himself is small. And when they all arrive at the same place, where are they?

For Reston and his fellows in daily journalism have an unbreakable engagement with the society as it is. They may criticize its efficiency but do not question its values. Reston believes strongly in journalistic support of the 'national interest', which he interprets in roughly the same way as would the people he likes to interview — Clark Kerr and all that. For 'over a year' he knew that U-2s were flying over the Soviet Union from a base in Pakistan, yet he did not report that story until the first plane was shot down in 1960. It is necessary, he says, even 'obviously essential', for the CIA to conduct operations around the world and 'research projects in our own uni-

versities' without a public accounting. He tends to agree with President Kennedy's notion that a premature exposure of plans for the Bay of Pigs invasion 'might have saved the nation from the consequences of that fiasco.' But it would have been disastrous to reveal US preparations for the missile crisis of 1962 which, Reston says, 'proved to be an essential and spectacularly successful exercise of American power and diplomacy.' The press must choose its stories to save the nation:

There is no guiding principle that will cover all cases, yet it is clear in this time of half-war and half-peace that the old principle of publish-and-be-damned, while very romantic, bold and hairy, can often damage the national interest. ... The responsibility of the press is increasing with the world power of the nation.

Reston has few doubts about the nature of that power:

The record of the American people in adapting to new conditions since World War II is not merely remarkable but unprecedented in the history of democratic societies. Whatever the conflicts between past and present, between officials and reporters, between old traditions and new responsibilities, the central fact is that the United States has changed its policies fast enough to be an effective force in world affairs.

It has created a new balance of power in the world. It has abandoned its old traditions of isolation, low taxation, no military conscription, and laissez-faire capitalism; and in the process, it has helped remove the spirit of domination that stained national and international politics, even in the Western world, during the period before and between the two world wars.

All that is more than inaccurate reporting. It is also a particular view of the world, which implies a set of values as its fundament and a set of perceptions about the opera-

tion of men and institutions as its consequence. The principal demand of the ideology of imperial America is the co-operation of all institutions. Independence is quite literally unthinkable. Reston obligingly postulates a new 'alliance' between the government and the press: 'They have more to gain by cooperation with one another ... than by regarding one another as "the enemy",' he concludes. The new spirit of *alianza* is in most respects akin to the developing partnership between government and the big corporations, government and the big foundations, government and the big unions, the big private organizations, the big universities. Journalists – like the managers, the union leaders, the foundation directors, the teachers and students – are indoctrinated by the institutions they serve. The *Times* shop is as useful an instrument of ideological training as any. What students pick up in four years at, say, the University of Pennsylvania is much like what a reporter picks up in however many years at the *New York Times*. He is trapped, but he is permitted an illusory kind of freedom. Dissent is allowed, even encouraged, as long as it is irrelevant to change. Resistance is out of the question.

Given that ideological context, it is hard to make much sense out of Reston's discussion of the independent 'influence' of the press in foreign policy (his assigned topic in these lectures). As it turns out, Reston can't make much sense of this question himself. 'The influence of the press on foreign policy depends on the attitude of the President toward the press,' he says, and John Kennedy's reading habits 'enhanced the influence of the press during his thousand days at the White House.' On second thought, Reston says that the press influences foreign policy through the Congress and 'the intellectual and

communications communities of the nation.' And after all that, he decides that the very idea that the press has a decisive influence at all is 'preposterous'.

Reston is not alone in his inability to think clearly about press influence: a coherent theory would be an epistemological landmark, and it has not yet been written. He is probably right to dismiss the press's role in affecting discrete decisions. But the press does have influence, as much as any other institution in the society, in transmitting the material of the ideology. It works not by scoops or exposés; the policy changes they may cause are always short-lived or insignificant. But in the unperceived, exquisitely subtle arrangement of ideas, day after day, the press tells its readers what's what – which values are safe, what politics are profitable, how they can make it to the top. No working journalist on a powerful publication in the U S is truly independent of that function.

The restrictions on the independence of the press (a different quality than freedom of the press) are those journalistic values which working newsmen hold dear: the rules of the game. The 'national interest' comes first. Sources must be 'protected'. And above all, reporters must be objective.

'Objectivity' is the rationalization for moral disengagement, the classic cop-out from choice-making. Reston, like most reporters, is careful to preserve the appearance of objectivity; he is in no politician's pay, accepts no favours for his opinions, and has no formal relationship with the Administration. Harrison Salisbury may want to testify at Foreign Relations Committee hearings, but not Reston (or Walter Lippmann, who was invited and refused). He is a member of the most uncontroversial organizations: the board of the Population Council in New York and National Educational Television (he is leaving, as N E T

has become a political issue). But the form of objectivity is of no consequence. Reston is as involved with an ideology as any editor of the *Worker* or *Human Events* – except that they have made the moral commitment, and he has not. Only the morally conscious are free, and only a press which makes its own choices, and its own commitments, can be independent.

Serving Time

New York Review of Books 12.9.68

I used to work for *Time*; or was it sell? A Lucemployee is always a salesman first, and then a journalist of whatever degree. For most of three years, I was listed on the masthead as a correspondent in the San Francisco and Los Angeles bureaux, where I was assigned coverage of anything that could conceivably find its way into the magazine (except, of course, politics, which was left to wiser heads). I once investigated the left-foot braking trend – that is, the use of the left foot to apply the brakes on cars without a clutch. The trend was soon aborted. Shortly thereafter, I accompanied Conrad Hilton halfway around the world on a sentimental *chevauchée* from one Hilton hotel to another. That ended abruptly when Pope John's untimely death cancelled the gala opening of the Rome Hilton. On other occasions, I was sent to Fairbanks in late December by a superior who seemed to be made nervous by my presence in his bureau; to Aspen to ski-along with the Kennedys; to Tijuana to follow El Cordobés into the bull-ring; to Portland to watch open-heart surgery; to Baja California to observe the copulation of whales. Some of all that activity (and a lot of Business Section reporting, which I have repressed) eventually became bits and pieces of articles. But it occurred to me, long after I left *Time* for the distinctly drearier world of liberal political journalism, that reporting had been my secondary function. First of all, I was a drummer for the largest, most powerful publishing corporation in the world.

Time's business is to promote Time Inc. as a corporate empire. Like all imperial systems, it is ultimately self-justifying; worlds must be conquered because they are there. Along the way, one or another rationalization can be made: it makes money for stockholders, employs talented journalists, imparts useful information to a mass audience, invigorates the economy through advertising, and helps US policy in Vietnam. All that may be true, but the basic urge is to its own expansion. The metastasis is the message.

For shorter or longer periods, *Time's* writers and reporters can believe that their jobs are largely separate from the machinery of the imperial corporation. They do their journalistic thing and the business types do theirs. Except for a few annoying extra-reportorial chores (I can recall two: finding scuba equipment for Clare Boothe Luce, and checking out a graduate school for an executive's son), correspondents are generally left to their whales and what-nots. In their minds they perceive a gulf fixed between them and the corporate side. But at last it is only in their minds. They are company men as surely as any ad. salesman. They function not as independent journalists but as operatives of an institution which is not primarily journalistic. Interests which have nothing to do with news reporting form the context in which the reporters must work, and the institutional values flow accordingly. Careerism, status, non-involvement, flippancy, a patronizing tone: it's all built into the system. Whatever it once may have been, working for *Time* is not now like working for *Le Monde* or the *National Review* or the *Arkansas Gazette*. A *Time* reporter might as well be a junior executive at Hunt Foods or Unilever: all corporate conglomerates are essentially the same.

John Kobler's thin, chatty – altogether *Timey* –

biography of Henry Luce lists some of the effects of *Time's* 'corporate journalism', but it hardly discusses the implications. Luce's life – at least in the telling of it – has a certain one-dimensionality, a uniform gruffness that leads biographers to proclaim honesty, integrity, and foresight and then find themselves stumped for a second chapter. (Luce's co-founder of Time Inc., Briton Hadden, was much more interesting, but he died of a sore throat at an early age.) In any case, Luce is only the beginning of the story of *Time*.

In that beginning, Luce had a dream (fantasy?) of 'corporate journalism'. There were two inspirations – Calvinism and capitalism – and two aspects: the corporate process in which reporters, writers, and editors work assembly-line fashion; and the corporate adventure to assemble power on a national (and now international) scale.

There is no mystery in the way the old Time religion served the development of the Company. Luce imparted the strict missionary values he learned from his parents in Tengchow to the corporate child of his own creation. Professor Tawney could have had no better case-study. Kobler reports that Luce used to turn on to acid, but it seems hardly necessary (anyway it was Clare's idea); he was on a permanent Presbyterian high. From time to time on that trip he would see John Calvin, Adam Smith, and George Washington walking together through the gates of Paradise. *Time* reflected that hallucination. The company's financial success was final proof of its moral validity.

Like its two sources, the two streams of corporate journalism fed each other. *Time's* internal organization was uniquely suited to its external development. Like Alfred

Sloan's General Motors, Luce's Time Inc. built its power on a base of decentralized divisions. The company was able to expand in depth and extent with equal facility. What was most important was the role of the individual: isolated, dependent, and fragmented. *Time* journalists are kept out of the general community of journalism by the peculiar anonymity of their work. At the same time, they become profoundly dependent on the Company for visible and invisible means of support. Finally, their work within *Time* is so utterly fragmented that, after a while, they seem to lose integrity even out of the office. The ultimate alienation (metaphorically) takes place on Saturday evenings, as the major front-of-the-book sections of *Time* are closing: writers, editors, and researchers are served an elegant Restaurant Associates dinner, cafeteria-style from steam tables, in a barren meeting room on one of *Time*-Edit's floors in the Rockefeller Center building. Then each person takes his or her tray back to his or her little cubicle, a modular-plan office which can be reshaped or eliminated entirely overnight (and often is). The meal is usually eaten in silence and isolation, and when it is over, the diner places the tray outside the sliding door on the clickety-clackety floor. At some indeterminate time during the next few hours, an underpaid Puerto Rican pads by with a cart and removes the tray. Very clean; very efficient.

In group journalism, an individual reporter or writer is reduced to an unnecessary and insufficient production component. Even the collectivity is unimportant; only the process counts. The local bureaux and the various news departments in New York are not communes of journalists, but units of journalistic production. No one individual or unit ever sees a piece of work – the article – through from beginning to end. The correspondent

reports it, the researcher checks it, the writer writes it, the senior editor changes it, and the top editor disposes of it both ideologically and mechanically. The lines cannot be crossed. If a correspondent in a bureau wrote the perfect 'finished' *Time* story, all fit to size and complete in every detail, he would be reprimanded. His job was to write the perfect unfinished research file, containing ten times as much information as 'New York' needed to know.

Like the state of grace, *Time* is inevitable. It appears each week regardless of the works of men, who nonetheless feel themselves prisoners, under a crushing imperative to act as if what they did really made a difference. The basic Calvinist contradiction – the necessity of work against its unimportance – drives most *Time* staffers to distraction, or bars, or other jobs. In recent years, the more contemporary among *Time*'s managers have tried to devise various methods to support their workers' individuality. There are intra-office congratulations, occasional plugs in the Publisher's Letter, and once in a great while, a direct quotation from a correspondent's file in an actual printed story. But most *Time* writers have to read their names in six-point type on the masthead each week just to be sure that they are still alive.

Except for an occasional appearance on 'Meet the Press', or a free-lance article in a 'non-competing' publication, *Time* journalists have no opportunity to earn a reputation outside the company. The *New York Times*'s David Halberstam became a national celebrity as a reporter in Vietnam; *Time*'s Charles Mohr (who had more experience, a bigger salary, and a larger circulation) was virtually unknown until he quit the magazine and told all (to Halberstam, naturally, who wrote it all up). If reputation is a writer's capital, *Time* staffers can never

invest. On the contrary: they are forever in debt to *Time* itself, which supports them in a manner to which they quickly become accustomed, and from which it is extremely hard to descend.

Time's institutional importance may lend a reporter a certain anonymous status on the scene ('there's the man from *Time*') but he cannot claim the fame as his own; it belongs to the company. Inside *Time*, office politics offers its opportunities for advancement, but only vertically in Rockefeller Center, not laterally to other publications. (Once staked out exclusively for gentile Ivy Leaguers according to Luce's preferences, *Time* is now meritocratic enough to allow a midwestern newspaper reporter almost as much chance as an Eastern preppy). *Time* is liberal with its salaries and positively radical with its expense allowances, which serve as indices of a reporter's success in covering his field. Traditionally, new correspondents are called in by their bureau chief after the first month's expense record is lodged, and told that they must entertain and travel more freely if their value is to be appreciated in New York. 'You have Air Travel cards. Use them!' a news service memo once urged in a directive to correspondents, who thereupon winged off in all directions. There are minor restrictions, but for the most part *Time* staffers are free to spend almost anything for any purpose and 'put it down as a lunch.' The phrase is almost a corporate philosophy.

Many young journalists who come to work for *Time* reckon that they will stay for lunch and then leave after a few years, just at the moment that their souls begin to slip away to corporate ownership. Some do eat and run; but it is harder than they think. The process of assimilation into *Time* style (corporate and literary) begins quickly, and before very long they are both selling and sold.

What we disliked most about *Time* was not its politics or its style or its support of this or that idea, but its manipulation of us. All the rest we had come to accept, and we knew it was no better on other magazines or papers. (The *New York Times* too has terrible politics, worse style, and it supports bad ideas.) But what dominated our lives was the *Time* process; it was the topic of every four-martini lunch. The atmosphere of extreme alienation helped produce many of the effects which readers of *Time* can easily spot: the phoney crisis, the false narrative integrity of a story, the flip cynicism, the hollow know-it-all airs, the adolescent sexual leers. In any case, the formulization of *Time* stories* became almost a ritual response to our situation; the obsessive puns and excessive jokes were a pathological symptom.

The simple mechanism of alienation was universal unresponsibility. Correspondents believed that nothing they wrote would ever be printed in any recognizable form, and any facts they might supply (or invent) would be checked and corrected by researchers at some point along the way. Writers had no connexion at all with the realities of the stories they wrote; they just supplied the structure (Otto Friedrich, of *Newsweek* and the *Saturday Evening Post*, once described it all in a *Harper's* article called 'There are 00 Trees in Russia.' In the classic news-magazine tradition, writers never need know facts at all; they leave blanks for researchers to fill in). No one was accountable for anything. Dissimulation to sources be-

*The basic structure of the *Time* formula is the extrapolation from insignificant detail to cosmic truth. It has its origin in an (apocryphal) *Life* photo caption: Under a one-column cut of Hitler eating from a bowl with a spoon: 'ADOLF HITLER EATS corn-flakes for breakfast, wants to conquer world.'

came the only possible defence; to an interviewer, devastated by a brutal attack in *Time*, a correspondent will always say: 'I wrote it better.'

If *Time* style is at least partly a function of the reporting and writing process, *Time's* content is largely determined by its corporate role. Bureaux are more than news-gathering depots; they are missions to centres of power. Bureau chiefs naturally have ambassadorial status. Kobler reports that Luce told a correspondent on his way to Berlin in 1940, 'When you get there, remember you're second only to the American ambassador.' Abroad, *Time* editors travel in semi-state formality, commanding interviews with native potentates and, occasionally, granting interviews themselves to important figures. Time Inc. for many years had a roving ambassador-without-portfolio, John Scott, whose job was to travel abroad for periods of time and then make speeches about world affairs to businessmen's dinners in the U.S.

In domestic bureaux, *Time* reporters have a less stately but more critical role. They minister to the interests of the local business and political leaders, or at least those with whom Time Inc. must do business or politics. In Los Angeles, for instance, the bureau chief is given a large subsidy for a fancy house in which he can entertain Southern California fat cats in a style they will appreciate. Every so often, one of them is encouraged in his appreciation by a favourable story. The highest tribute is a cover story (followed by the presentation of the original cover portrait to the subject), and the cats all scramble for that honour. Over the last several years, the LA bureau has done covers on Mrs Norman Chandler (Los Angeles *Times*, University of California, culture patron), Charles 'Tex' Thornton (Litton Industries, ex-whiz-kid at Ford, Nixon adviser), William Pereira (architecture and plan-

ning), Courtlandt Gross (Lockheed), Norton Simon (Hunt Foods), Tom Jones (Northrop Corporation), Conrad Hilton. Each of the articles may contain one or two uncomplimentary facts or comments (Mr X picks his nose at dinner parties) but by and large they eulogize the subject and all his works. Over the years, coverboys and girls represent those interests with which Time Inc. will associate itself. On the simplest level, the subjects help provide advertising for many of Time's publications. But beyond that, they are tied into the same élite establishments as *Time*, and mutual back-scratching is the rule of that club. Along with *Time*'s cover on Mrs Chandler ('Buffy'), for example, Time Inc. made an enormous gift to the L A Music Center, which was her personal promotion.

My own realization of *Time*'s public relations function came by way of the first assignment I had in Los Angeles. As a young 'trainee' in the bureau, I was asked to check on a minor development in the business dealings of Edward Carter, the head of a huge department store chain (as well as a chairman of the Board of Regents of the University of California). I phoned Carter's office, assuming an assistant would give me the required information. But Carter himself answered and immediately offered to come and see me. He was in my office in a flash. I remember wondering why he had been so incredibly eager and accommodating; when he left, an older reporter told me that Carter would do just about anything for a cover story in *Time*. (He hasn't made it yet.)

The pay-offs for *Time*'s favours are by no means direct (nor always forthcoming). *Time* will cut an important political figure as often as promote him, and it is difficult

(perhaps irrelevant) to determine the reason. Hatchet jobs may spring from the whims of an editor as well as from his ideology, or *Time's* corporate interests. In a way, it makes good sense to build a certain arbitrariness into the magazine. Back-of-the-book cover stories (culture, science, education) are generally throw-aways as far as the business of *Time* is concerned, but there are occasional benefits there too. The most enjoyable work I ever did for *Time* was a cover file on Andrew Wyeth, but I see now that that story began a long and profitable association of *Time* with Wyeth. (Besides, *Time's* original reasons for choosing Wyeth were philistine – and wrong.)

In the long run, it is perfectly clear which side *Time* is on – not because of its particular stories but because of the meaning of the magazine as an institutional package. Stories are just one item in the box. They give the offering a certain appeal, but over-all they are of minor significance. In so far as *Time* promotes a view of what's important about the world, the advertising copy is far heavier than the news. Readers can easily challenge a particular piece of reportage; advertising works much more subtly. Over the weeks and years, it is the ads which tell readers what to think, how to dress, what to buy, and what to value in life. Much more than the articles, the ads transmit a sense of social class and a basic political consciousness. The preponderance of insurance, airline, securities, Scotch whisky, and communications media advertising (not to exclude those toney double-page 'institutional' ads featuring abstract designs and scribbled quotations by Lucretius, Lao-Tse, and Alfred North Whitehead) makes the point. Further, the whole *feel* of *Time* (and the other Time Inc. publications, in their various ways), its design, its audience, its marketing methods, and its trans-verbal tones give it a cultural position – and, by

extension, a political one – which mere articles could never establish.

Journalists promote the package; the package promotes the corporation. From an event in journalistic history which changed everyone's conception of news presentation, *Time* became an event in marketing history. Surely Henry Luce had not dreamed of that eventuality, even if somewhere, down below, the possibilities were embedded in corporate Calvinism. But *Time* is largely a product of what has happened to America in the last half-century: specifically, how corporations have developed an organizational position so controlling that the whole system can be called 'corporatism'. *Time's* movement is nicely illustrative of that process. Since Luce's death, *Time* has become more 'liberal' while burrowing deeper into the corporate ethic. Reactionary social policy does not promote the image of the new establishment, which is more interested in co-optation than repression, more concerned with creating new markets than restricting consumption. The recent change in *Time's* managing editorship – from the middle-brow midwestern conservative Otto Fuerbringer to the sophisticated Viennese cosmopolite Henry Anatole Grunwald – reflects the corporation's new conception of itself.

In the early sixties, we received a teletype memo in the Los Angeles bureau announcing the establishment of a 'Research and Development' office for Time Inc. The idea struck us as pretentious and amusing; *Time* seemed to be imitating the technological corporations of Southern California about which we had been writing. As things turned out, it was not all that funny. *Time's* managers (in particular, Luce's successor, a brilliant, Kennedyesque, former *Fortune* editor named Hedley Donovan) began to

understand the dynamic of empire: rationalize or die. One way of looking at things, which was Donovan's way, was that *Time* was in the 'education business', and education theory was in a highly volatile state. McLuhan was just peeking up from underground, a generation of new educationists was coming into its own, and John Kennedy was preparing to spend billions of dollars on schools.

At the same time, Donovan was worried that Time Inc. itself was irrationally and inefficiently managed. Too many decisions were left to chance encounters at Piping Rock golf course, and the cleverest people in each magazine did not have the bureaucratic space to analyze their own problems objectively. Donovan's solution was to set up 'R and D' outside the traditional flow-chart of Time Inc., a super-department apart from the publications and business divisions. Its first job, in 1963, was to study the future of mass magazines, and in due course there appeared a report which was, among other things, sharply critical of *Life*. The burden of the criticism was that in trying to compete with television (basically, for advertising revenue), *Life* had become impossibly confused and unprofitable to boot. The report recommended a change of format and personnel, both of which were quickly effected.

There were a few other studies (video-tape, closed circuit television), but the major effort was a research project undertaken by Charles Silberman, a *Fortune* writer (author of *Crisis in Black and White*), on the future of the education industry. Silberman assembled a high-powered staff (Jerome Bruner was a consultant) and came up with a secret report that explored the implications of the new educational technology. Various intellectual and managerial arguments raged on the issues Silberman raised, but in the end the burden of his conclusions was

accepted. The most important tangible result was Time Inc.'s deal with General Electric to form the General Learning Corporation, to develop, produce, and promote 'teaching machines' and programmes.

The debate on the issues along the way would make a fascinating study in itself. Donovan worried about the shortage of talent for new projects; Andrew Heiskell (whose contacts with G E as head of Urban America led to the final deal) was worried about financing; James Linen was worried about profit. Some executives were troubled by the Lucean myth that Time Inc. was not out to make money but to further the public interest (they obviously had *not* read Professor Tawney), but Donovan assured his colleagues that if making money were not *Time's* objective, it was both a means for reaching that objective and a measure of success. In the fullness of time, expansion provided its own rationale, and the objections were discarded.

As it happened, the experience with G E was disappointing. According to some Time Inc. cynics, G E thought it was 'buying *Time's* Washington bureau for its \$18.5 million, in order to sniff out where the contracts were at the Pentagon and the Office of Education.' Time Inc. was presumed to be an innocent led astray by the G E heavies. Francis Keppel, the former Commissioner of Education who became head of General Learning, was said to be confused as to the direction his corporation should take. In fact, the problem was mostly managerial. G E certainly wanted its inside track, but so did Time Inc. In those years – as a consequence of John Kennedy's Keynesianism – corporation planners began to see that they might eventually make as much money out of domestic 'welfare' contracts with government agencies as the defence industries had done with the Pentagon. The idea

was to substitute corporate planning for socialist planning. By doing their own R and D, defence companies had been able to 'make policy' and thus calculate their needs far into the future. Now non-military corporations – both Time and G E – wanted the same kind of advantage. By developing and producing teaching 'systems' (the theory went), General Learning could in effect make educational policy, and be able to plan ahead for financing, materials, marketing, and personnel. Its (temporary) failure was in poor management and an inaccurate estimate of the readiness of American education to accept a wholesale imposition of the new systems. (Also, the theory is incomplete, as G L C now knows.)

Only slightly put off by General Learning's inadequacies, Time Inc. has continued to advance its frontiers. R and D has been renamed and re-fashioned 'Corporate Development'. Time Inc. has embarked on a series of mergers with other publishing outfits; the latest acquisition is Little, Brown (a deal to buy the Newark *Evening News* was cancelled at the last minute, but Time is said to be in the market for other newspapers). The basic impetus is to branch out horizontally into all the reaches of the 'communications' industry, ready to take advantage of whatever McLuhanesque developments may appear. Like R C A, which owns the Random House complex, Time Inc. needs to prepare for the coming age of electronic publishing.

Already, Time's own Book Division, which was started in 1961, is a \$60 million business. Time owns 300,000 shares of M G M stock, and has interests in prestige publishing houses in Europe (Robert Lafont in France, Rowohlt in Germany). In the U S, Time has its legal quota of television outlets and a string of radio stations;

it controls, or has an interest in, television in Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, New Zealand, Germany, and Hong Kong. In Italy and Argentina it publishes a magazine called *Panorama* with local companies; in Japan it puts out *President*. In the US it has interests in pulp and paper mills, a marketing company and printing firm, and the New York Graphic Society. And of course it publishes those magazines. It all comes to \$500 million a year, give or take a few million, and makes Time Inc. the 174th largest industrial corporation in the U S.

Time's sheer wealth and power would be intimidating enough, like some imposing Alp. But the implications of rapidly expanding corporate journalism are much more dreadful. For the society (and now that Time is international, for many societies), it can produce mass ideological manipulation, create worthless demand, and impose a whole range of values which are important to the interests of the corporation but destructive of the individual. Time has tried its hand at all that, and in some instances (China lobbying; anti-communism; the 'business ethic') its success is impressive. If it seems now that the mass media are much more vulnerable than people used to think they would be, it is still true that it takes a great deal of energy to overcome their effect. Resistance is difficult to organize; *Time* can be uncommonly subtle. Its treatment of the hippies, for example, amounted to a puff-piece on one level. But in a deeper sense, the tone of the article and, more important, what surrounded it in the magazine had the effect of isolating, patronizing, and ultimately discrediting the hippie phenomenon as a kind of amusing piece of social pathology (which nonetheless held lessons for all us straight, healthy people).

Corporate journalism's effect is much more clearly seen on the consciousness of its employee victims. I know that

Time worked its power on me, as it does on all its journalists, and I am sure that none of us can escape a lasting taint. The best example of the mechanics of corruption in my own *Time* experience concerns a situation in California in 1964, just before I left the magazine. That fall, I was commuting between the Los Angeles and San Francisco bureaux. In Berkeley, almost within sniping range from *Time*'s offices in a San Francisco skyscraper, the students had begun the first demonstrations in the Free Speech Movement. That story was being covered by another reporter in the bureau. My feeling was that he had no basic understanding of the movement; but although I remember 'supporting' the students from instinct, I did not try to take the assignment of covering their actions. I probably rationalized by saying that I had other work in progress, or that the bureau colleague got to Berkeley first, or that reporting a riot is too messy. But if I had cared enough, all those excuses would have melted away.

I think I did not care because *Time* wouldn't let me. (A few months later, when I was part of a different institution, I found that I cared about the F S M enormously, so I concluded that the trouble had been with my situation, not my constitution.) At lunch or cocktails in San Francisco, I defended the student movement, but in all those months I never even crossed the bridge to Berkeley to see it for myself, either in my role as a reporter or simply as a person. I knew that I could have no real effect on *Time*'s attitude toward student revolution, even if my research 'file' had been brilliant, and I guessed that any report I did would have too many half-conscious 'qualifications' thrown in to appease hostile editors and convince them of the legitimacy of my political judgement. The contradiction between how I knew I would respond to the F S M and what I knew I could accomplish was too press-

ing; without knowing why, I fled from the dissonance, back to stories which presented no such problems, and a social life which offered no conflicts of conscience.

In a very general way, that must be how most people react to conflicts in the wider society. The big 'system' turns people off the way *Time's* smaller system did. It is too painfully dissonant to confront issues without the power to effect solutions, even partially; it is difficult to admit discord with the neighbours or the boss. *Time* (and the big system) supports those who like insurance companies, airlines, Nelson Rockefeller, and the American Empire; it makes life difficult for those who dig black revolution, hippies, and the Viet Cong. There is nothing surprising in that, but before I went to work selling *Time* I never knew why it was so.

To Maintain an Empire

What it would take to force America into imperial retreat so far defies prediction or analysis. Older models for the dissolution of empires seem not to apply. No Huns are at the gates of Washington, no Hitler ravages the world around. By rights, North Korea, the Vietcong and Fidel Castro should be nothing more than minor irritants; the only other super-power, after all, plays America's game (abiding by the rules is more important than choosing sides). But perhaps there is a counter-force at work, or a combination of forces that together can challenge the empire. *Someone* seems to be at the gates of Washington, and one by one, America's colonies, at home and abroad, find possibilities for struggle. The trick is to find a new game with new rules.

The Significance of the 'Pueblo'

New Statesman 1.3.68

The iron rule of espionage decrees that spies will tend to blow their cover, unless acted upon by an outside force. The catch in the spy game is that success, according to its own standards, is so vastly unrewarding. Public acclaim (and publishers' royalties) come only with failure; no one knows how good a spy is until he is caught spying. So a secret agent is compelled by the logic of his career to invite exposure.

While President Johnson slept and the North Koreans patrolled, no force was keeping the *USS Pueblo* from provoking its own capture. So far, that is the only reasonable explanation for the bizarre maritime 'happening' last week off the coast of North Korea. What the spy ship could have been overhearing in that tight-lipped nation remains a mystery. It is hard to believe that premier Kim Il-Song chatters away about state secrets over the telephone (as President Nasser and King Hussein did last year, under the ears of the *USS Liberty*). Nor is it credible that the *Pueblo* was spying on the North Korean navy – an unworthy target indeed for all that expensive and 'sophisticated' electronic gadgetry. (The Korean armada consists mostly of armed junks, and *Pueblo* is now its largest vessel.) Perhaps the *Pueblo* was dropping off or picking up infiltrators, or executing some other exotic manoeuvre. But most probably it was showing off, performing a bit of *adorno* to call attention to its own 'sophistication'.

Whatever the reasons for the *Pueblo's* maladroitness,

the political consequences now far outweigh any advantages the espionage activities might have conferred. The Johnson administration has been profoundly embarrassed – not so much because its spies were caught with their antennae up, but because there is really no practicable way out of the mess except through the good intentions of the North Koreans. Wisely, if sadly, the President knows enough not to rely on *them*.

Events leading up to and surrounding the ship's seizure do not do much credit to the administration's own 'sophistication'. For weeks North Korean patrol boats had been buzzing around US ships. More tension came from the renewed sniping around the Korean demilitarized zone, and the recent attempt on the life of South Korean President Chung Hee Park. There were rumours that South Korea was about to send another army division to Vietnam (they already have 40,000 troops there) and some hostile response from Pyongyang might have been expected.

Still, the *Pueblo* pattered around Yonghung bay without escort or arms. On the day of its capture it was 'harassed' for two hours without conference with Washington. Even after its seizure the President was not notified; the operative official watching events in the White House was W. W. Rostow. By the time the President heard the news, the ship was in Wonson harbour, the *Enterprise* was steaming north from Japan, and the US was locked into a confrontation of another's devising.

There has been applause all around from the Vietnam doves for Mr Johnson's restraint in choosing not to bomb the North Koreans 'back into the Stone Age', as he is doing to the North Vietnamese. No doubt we must be thankful for small favours of generosity from an adminis-

tration capable of such overwhelming meanness. But the President is not exactly acting out of kindness. He is caught in a political crossfire: Republicans and Democratic jingoists are attacking him for weakness and incompetence, and liberals warn that the war could suddenly leap up the Pacific slope.

More than that, the demands of the Vietnam adventure make other escapades difficult. As it is, the President had been prevented by political considerations at home from calling up the reserves his hungry generals told him they need. The *Pueblo* incident gave him an opportunity to activate 15,000 more men and a number of aeroplanes, but that is hardly enough to mount an invasion – or even a fair-sized raiding party – in North Korea.

As he did during the Middle East crisis in June, the President began to 'defuse' the *Pueblo* situation from the beginning. He called Arthur Goldberg, his official demolition expert, and told him to waffle at the United Nations for a few days. He sent Secretary Rusk up to Congress to reassure the folks that diplomacy, not military action, would be the response. Rusk hedged the issue; he publicly pronounced the seizure an 'act of war', and then privately told Congressmen that there were extraordinary tidal variations in Yonghung Bay that might account for a misperception of the *Pueblo*'s exact location on the part of the Koreans.

The US is relying on the niceties of international law to avoid grappling with international politics. In public, officials maintain that the *Pueblo* was definitely outside the territorial limit of North Korea, although it now appears that the ship was closer than originally reported. The first announcement put the ship 'thirty-five miles from shore'. By last Saturday, the estimate was down to

3.3 nautical miles outside the twelve-mile boundary. No one has yet said where the *Pueblo* was in the hours *before* its capture; presumably it was not sitting quietly at anchor. Nor has there been any explanation of the reported periods of radio silence from the ship, when it might well have been nearer the coast.

But perhaps it is well to keep the administration happy and let the story stand as told without many questions. Ronald Reagan is calling for forcible retrieval of the crew and the ship, and Rep. L. Mendel Rivers, the Pentagon's chief lobbyist in Congress – he heads the House Armed Services Committee – wants 'bombing of the North' in reprisal. Americans have been battered enough this winter; one more defeat for the empire may be too many.

The incident certainly points up the problems of imperialism. 'It's come to the point where the only people who can do anything in the world are aggressive small powers; the big ones are like dinosaurs, lumbering about with their nuclear responsibilities,' a senior UN official observed this week. Gunboat diplomacy no longer is effective – except in reverse. The US is more frightened of North Korean (and North Vietnamese) patrol boats than they are afraid of the *Enterprise*.

Against the backdrop of the Vietnamese war, even isolated incidents can have widespread consequences. The NLF is currently making good on its promise to produce a 'military solution'. The American and South Vietnamese armies are helpless to make a concerted counter-attack. When they mass at Khe Sanh, the Vietcong sweeps into Saigon and the other fortress cities. General Westmoreland is still fighting a war of front-lines and occupied 'real estate'. He interprets the action near the Vietnamese DMZ as the 'major assault' and then is surprised by the

guerrilla attacks in the cities to the south. The fact is that there is no place where his enemies make their principal stand. Every battle – Loc Ninh, Dak To, Con Thien, Khe Sanh – is 'diversionary'. And so, for all that, is the episode in Yonghung Bay.

The Tonkin Gulf Incident

New Statesman 1.3.68

In the summer of 1964 President Johnson found himself confronted by a series of traps. Domestic politics demanded that he project the hope of both peace and victory in Vietnam. Foreign diplomacy seemed to make those goals mutually contradictory. But the President was forced to choose between them, and the decision he made has led directly to the present engulfing disaster. The first steps of the descent have for some time been clear in a theoretical sense to students of the Vietnam conflict. Now, because of the lonely courage – if not the obsessive tenacity – of Senator Fulbright, the reality of those decisive days can be understood. The Senator's Foreign Relations Committee hearings, on the 'Tonkin Incident', have already disclosed enough to destroy any government in a parliamentary system. President Johnson, of course, will not resign. But the pattern of deception and bureaucratic evasion which the hearings establish must undermine the legitimacy of the administration. Above all, Fulbright shows the war is built on a lie.

Barry Goldwater was nominated for the presidency on 15 July 1964, with a platform that implicitly accused Johnson of weakness in the face of the 'communist threat' in South-East Asia. A week later General de Gaulle urged the calling of a 'Geneva' conference to negotiate a settlement in Vietnam. At the same time U Thant and the Soviet Union urged an actual reconvening of the Geneva signatories. North Vietnam supported the proposal and

also began 'feeling' for a meeting with the US in Rangoon. The NLF spokesman favoured negotiations.

But Johnson felt the need to protect his right flank at home and in Vietnam. Like all Democrats since Yalta, he was deathly afraid of the Republican charge of 'soft on communism'. Moreover, he was about to begin campaigning on a consensus image; he was (or wanted to be) 'President of all the people', elected not as the inheritor of the Kennedy mystique but in his own right.

In Vietnam, the military regime of General Khanh was weak and unpopular (the Buddhists would soon topple it anyway). In desperation, Khanh began speaking of a *bac tien* or 'March to the North'. General Ky, then merely the commander of the air force, was already manoeuvring into power; he stole a jump on Khanh by announcing that air commandos had been dropped into the North. There were only 16,000 American troops in Vietnam: in the role of 'advisers'. Combat soldiers would not arrive until the next spring. President Johnson knew, or his military chiefs told him, that a move towards negotiations could destroy the anti-communist government in Saigon. The day after de Gaulle's proposal, the President said: 'We do not believe in conferences called to ratify terror.'

Early in the summer the President's office staff – led by McGeorge Bundy – began making plans for the show of national resolve which the President wanted to convey, both to the electorate in the US and the junta in Vietnam. Bundy's aides drew up a draft congressional resolution, based on models President Truman used in Korea and Eisenhower used in the Middle East crisis of 1958, expressing a kind of pre-agreement with any means Johnson might employ to 'stop communist aggression' in

South-East Asia. Exactly how or when the resolution would be introduced was undecided.

General Khanh, in effect, made that decision. Reassured by Johnson's rejection of negotiations, Khanh began staging naval raids on North Vietnamese mainland and island ports. The first of the series was on 25 July; the next was on 31 July. North Vietnam complained to the International Control Commission that the second set of raids was conducted under the protection of the US destroyer *Maddox*. The *Maddox* was a spy ship – an earlier, less sophisticated version of the *Liberty* and the *Pueblo* – and its role in the raiding operations has never been made clear. There were probably several 'missions' it performed; one was to stimulate the use of North Vietnamese electronic communications so that conversations could be overheard and military capability assessed. Another might have been to draw North Vietnamese attention away from the South's raiding parties. In theory, the *Maddox* was not a participant in the raids themselves, although American advisers had trained the South Vietnamese for such purposes and had provided them with ships. Perhaps specific information was relayed from the spy ship to the raiders; more likely, intelligence was supplied over a longer period of time, for general rather than specific use.

Whether or not the North Vietnamese were interested in the semantics of 'participation', they were concerned about the *Maddox*'s presence close to their shores. On 2 August three P T-boats approached the destroyer; the *Maddox* opened fire first, with what the US command called 'warning shots'. Fighter-bombers from a nearby US aircraft carrier attacked next, sinking one P T-boat and damaging the other two. The *Maddox* itself was only slightly damaged.

The Pentagon called it a minor incident, but the next day the President had second thoughts. He protested sternly to North Vietnam, and warned of retaliation if another attack occurred. On 3 August there was another South Vietnamese raid, and the *Maddox* was joined in the Gulf of Tonkin by the *Turner Joy*. The following night – ‘darker than the hubs of hell’, a radar operator said later – something happened in the Gulf of Tonkin. But what it was is still a mystery. The *Maddox* spotted blips on its radar screen and both US destroyers began firing in the dark. A US sailor saw a searchlight, and there were reports of torpedo wakes swishing through the sea. The US ships were untouched, and as far as anyone could tell there were no hits on any enemy craft. From the *Maddox*, the task force commander cabled Washington: ‘Review of action makes many reported contacts and torpedoes fired appear doubtful. Freak weather effects and over-eager sonarmen may have accounted for many reports. No visual sightings by *Maddox* suggest complete evaluation before any further action.’

By any standards of naval history, it was not much of an encounter; in the ensuing years, one US spy ship would be sunk and another captured with only a verbal protest from Johnson. But on 5 August, with about half a day’s ‘evaluation’, he ordered massive air strikes against North Vietnamese installations; sixty-four missions were flown and both bases and fuel-supply depots were destroyed. The same day the President asked Congress for the passage of a resolution of support ‘to promote the maintenance of international peace and security in South-East Asia’. Brief hearings were held; two days later the Senate passed the bill eighty-eight to two, with Fulbright its chief proponent and only Senators Morse and Gruening in opposition. It passed the House unanimously. The President

then signed what his cabinet now calls the 'functional declaration of war'.

It was these facts that Fulbright called Secretary McNamara to review in his secret committee hearings on 20 February. For more than two years now the Senator had brooded about his role in the Tonkin Resolution affair. Slowly he gathered information about the nature of the *Maddox's* mission and the political context in Washington and Saigon. His staff prepared a thick report (so far unreleased) documenting much of the deception that McNamara and Rusk employed in presenting the 'facts' of the incident to Congress in August 1964. Now he submitted McNamara to a penetrating day-long interrogation. The 110-page transcript of the hearings is one of the most extraordinary pieces of literature in current history and politics. McNamara was caught in only a few actual lies: for instance, he told Congress that the navy did not know of the South Vietnamese raids, when clearly both the high command and the *Maddox* task force chief did (the cables prove so). But what emerges most clearly is a sense of the banality of war. It is all too obvious that McNamara believed everything he said was true, and that in his bureaucratic conscience he saw that every step to escalation was logical and necessary. But if he disdains the Big Lie, he is master of the Little Truth. By concentrating on the trivial he ignores the larger context.

The events of that midsummer week in 1964 were the foundation for the major war that is now raging in Vietnam. The 'constitutional' justification was made, the bombing policy precedent was established and the conflict was extended to South-East Asia. In those few days, 5,000 more US troops were ordered to Vietnam, and new air attack systems were deployed in Thailand. The last real hope for negotiation was rejected, and the decision to

keep a military puppet regime in power in Saigon was made. Senator Fulbright knows that he was the instrument of escalation, and at the end of the hearings he admitted his unhappy role:

I have publicly apologized to my constituents and the country for the unwise action I took. It never occurred to me that there was the slightest doubt that this attack took place. I feel a very deep responsibility, and I regret it more than anything I have ever done in my life, that I was the vehicle which took that resolution to the floor and defended it in complete reliance upon information which, to say the very least, is somewhat dubious. If I had had enough sense to require complete evaluation I never would have made the mistake I did. I don't know why, what possessed me. The background was such that I went along. Of course I wasn't the only one. Both committees ... unanimously accepted your testimony then as the whole story, and I must say this raises very serious questions about how you make the decision to go to war.

Johnson and the Little Bomb

New Statesman 23.2.68

It is a sad symptom of a war which is more than sad that Americans cannot appreciate the heroism of the defence of Hue by the Vietnamese guerrillas. At another time, given a different history, we would see the three weeks in the citadel (at this writing) as a storybook inspiration – a new Stalingrad, the Blitz, the Alamo. As it is, all the pictures and all the perceptions, come from over the shoulders of the marines. In the papers and on television, the defenders are gooks, their defence is a suicide mission, and the only heroes are the imperial invaders with their God-given firepower. The conscience of the Republic was best expressed by the *Washington Star*, which declared the Vietcong guilty of the greatest material crime of the war by bringing on the destruction of Hue with their defence of it.

The indicators on the chauvinism scale are all up. At the end of the Têt offensive, the Gallup Poll found that sixty-two per cent of the American people considered themselves 'hawks' – up ten points from December. In the same period, confidence in President Johnson's handling of the war dropped seven points, presumably because he was not hawkish (that is, successful) enough. As a consequence, the President is scrambling to make his determination clear. A few hours after the NLF's 'second wave' barrage against US bases and South Vietnam's cities, the President decided to fly around the country to express his solidarity with the troops. Naturally, he picked the paras and the marines for his visit – their reputation

for brutality enhances his image of toughness. There followed a visit to General Eisenhower, who might or might not have understood what was happening, but in any case was good for a few mumbled words of encouragement for the war, in between mashie shots on the Palm Springs links. Mr Johnson uses the ageing, somewhat distracted ex-president as his private Republican oracle: the earth shakes lightly, the vapours thin, and whatever groans are heard can be interpreted to bestow historical legitimacy on the petitioner. (Palm Springs even *looks* like Delphi: lush valley, black precipitous cliffs, hard blue sky.) Safely removed from reality in Mr Eisenhower's desert retreat, the President took the opportunity to declare the guerilla offensive a positive blessing, not even disguised. Walt Whitman Rostow, who keeps track of such things, advised Mr Johnson that the widespread attacks had given the Saigon government and its army a new sense of togetherness. (Only the irreverent I. F. Stone pointed out that after a few more victories like that, the US would be lucky to end up with a coalition government in Hawaii.) Much of the President's flow of fantasy was directed to the troops in Vietnam rather than the folks at home. Morale within the imperial expedition is reported low. Rumours of General Westmoreland's imminent sacking contain too much logic to be easily dismissed, and the President made it a point to support his man on the spot. Still, Republican Congressmen are spreading the word that Westmoreland will be kicked upstairs, down, or sideways, before long.

Despite the optimistic faces, there is a real question of the U S's own resolve – not to mention that of our 'allies' – to stay in a war which is so obviously lost and beyond reverse. It is against that backdrop that the issue of tactical nuclear weapons must be seen. There has never been

any question that the Pentagon was willing, if not exactly eager, to throw around a few 'tac nukes' if the proper occasion arose. For years the army has been arguing that nuclear weapons are no different from 'conventional' ones, and that it was militarily counter-productive to attach a political mystique to their use. Earlier this month General Wheeler, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told a secret Senate committee hearing that the use of 'nukes' might be worth considering if the battle of Khe Sanh (if it ever happens) goes badly.

It was only twelve years ago that Admiral Radford – then the chief-chief – and Vice-President Nixon advised President Eisenhower to use nuclear weapons to relieve the French at Dien Bien Phu. The word from Delphi then was 'No', but it could easily have gone the other way. Certainly President Johnson has more than second thoughts now about the use of such weapons. For one thing Khe Sanh seems to be logistically inappropriate for nuclear shells: too many mountains, they say (although there is not much danger of self-destruction, apparently). For another, the international political repercussions are likely to be severe. Even Mr Wilson, with his remarkably high tolerance for America's war crimes, is put off by that; but the *discussion* of the use of tac nukes, rather than the actual deployment of them in battle, is seen by the Administration as an advantage. The White House's passionate denials have to be read in code – the same cipher in which all the news from Vietnam is written: black is white, defeat is victory, denial is affirmation. Discussion of the issue in a sense legitimizes it. Once the rumour that nuclear weapons will be used is abroad, sides may be taken, arguments may be made one way or the other and the sting of surprise is removed.

The history of escalation in the war is a long succession

of rumours (bombing of the North, more troops, new roles for the U S military), denials, fresh crises, and then agonized confirmations. No one admits, of course, that the actual escalatory move bears any connexion with the first rumour. It is always forced upon a reluctant President by the events which arose in the meantime. But it can also be found that the first suggestions were in fact planted by anonymous Administration sources. Bombing of the North is a good example: there was talk of it long before the retaliatory raids after Pleiku and the Gulf of Tonkin in 1965. But the Administration passionately denied the validity of the rumours, crises were met (or manufactured) and the bombing, when the right moment came, began.

In the case of the tac nukes, the denials were not even superficially convincing. The President refuses to say that the U S will not be the first to use nuclear weapons, although he has been asked to state as much. And despite his outraged criticism of those who publicly raised the issue (Senators Fulbright and McCarthy) the President has been careful to leave current the idea that the use of the weapons is quite conceivable. There is no proof yet. But the odds are good that the White House itself was the source of the 'anonymous' phone call to Fulbright's aide, which inaugurated the whole episode. Discussion of the issue is also a way to test public opinion, but, more than that, it serves to placate the generals, who continue to suspect that the President will not give them the wherewithal to fight their war. Johnson may be the leader of the mixed civilian-military junta which now seems to be running U S foreign policy, but he is not all-powerful. A few weeks ago he used the extraordinary device of forcing the generals to sign memoranda declaring their belief that Khe Sanh could be defended, and their commitment to that goal, but the ceremony was not one-sided. For his

part, the President pledged military and political support to the generals in their efforts. Whether that entails a go-ahead for tac nukes is bound to be the surprise of the spring season.

America's Empire in Revolt

New Statesman 14.6.68

America is near. The face on the ballroom floor in Los Angeles stares out from every news-stand here in Paris. Rockefeller's speech today gets as much attention as de Gaulle's yesterday. Students in the Sorbonne are more worried about C I A agents than French police spies, and older politicians believe that the U S started the student revolution to get rid of de Gaulle. 'Johnson assassin' is written on the walls next to more recent slogans. Vietnam and the American counter-revolution are pervasive influences. 'The unique and essential enemy is America,' a speaker said at midnight in the Boulevard St Germain des Prés.

Like many of the students he was addressing, the young man wore a buttoned-down shirt and Levi's; no doubt he listens to rhythm-and-blues and has mastered the techniques of the sit-in. For Western Europe at least, America is a mixed curse. The few delights of American culture have been imported at the staggering price of its many horrors. 'Things go better with Coke': things like the status system, automobile culture, Hollywood politics, T V dinners, the cult of violence, social scientism. Of course the victim has victimized himself. No C I A agents had to force Nanterre or the L S E to 'Americanize' themselves, to adopt all the worse aspects of mis-education as practised in Berkeley or Columbia. But just as East Germans know they must learn Russian to survive in the Soviet hegemony, Western Europeans know they must learn Americanized sociology to live in the New American era.

The dismay and disgust which has followed the latest Kennedy assassination in France and the rest of Europe has a tone of excessive hypocrisy. No Frenchman who saw the CRS attack students and workers in these weeks ought to be terribly shocked at violence in California. We share meanness as we share Coca-Cola. Ben Barka's assassination had no higher moral tone than Dr King's. Whatever differences that may exist in levels of violence among the 'advanced' societies of Europe and North America seem to be largely ones of style and technique, not effect. The British assault each other by imposing a class structure which may be more elegant but is no less brutal than structural racism in America; no American is so securely fettered as the British working-class man who is not allowed even to recognize the hands at his throat. The cult of non-violence can be as paralysing as its opposite.

Appropriate to its size and power, the US has developed a global system of violence which replicates in gross detail the material of its own history. The American civilization was founded on genocide and slavery: the extinction of the Indians was necessary for its political growth, the enslavement of the Negroes for its economic development. The imperial urge was present from the beginning: 'manifest destiny' can be applied equally to the annexation of the South West from Mexico, the armed interventions in Latin America, and the war against the Vietnamese. The intent is not necessarily bad, the effect has never been good. But the 'problem' of America is not that it is uniquely evil or violent or corrupt, but that it is dominant. The only real question is whether anyone in the world can yet be saved from its influence.

Travel the length of the 'free world' and much of the other, and you will see an extent of empire which makes

the older historical models seem hardly applicable. It is a marvel of adaptability, alternately brutal and seductive, at once liberal and repressive. It buys some and bombs others, and often buys and bombs at the same time. In Asia, the American empire has won control of almost every government on the periphery of China, by a combination of developmental aid and political support. Most Asian economies make more profits from the war in Vietnam than do U S corporations (if the two can be separated).

In Latin America, there are 'Green Berets' in almost every country, practising their little counter-insurgency games against real or imagined guerrillas. With dazzling versatility, the U S also supports 'liberals' (like President Frei in Chile) as a way to extend middle-class influence against the *oligarquia* on the one hand, and the peasantry on the other. Reforms are encouraged to dull the edge of discontent, and if they are carried out by the natives themselves, so much the better. But the non-negotiable issue is the control of most Latin American economies by U S corporations or their local agents.

In Africa, America operates more tactfully, buying up bagfuls of sincere nationalists (in Southern Africa, for instance) with the promise of support – either for economic development, or for the struggle against competing (and politically shortsighted) European colonialists. The Peace Corps and the A I D men soften up the populace with good intentions, then the more clandestine forces move in for the final bargain.

By now, Europe hardly needs much attention. The basic work was done when the U S 'saved' the continent after the war, and now the American position is secure, both by direct economic penetration and by the mutuality of interests implicit in the Western capitalist system. De-

spite the superficial conflicts (one industry may have competitive difficulties), the benefits ultimately flow to the dominant power. Support for foreign policy follows the same lines as economic power, from Europe to America. Minor irritants like de Gaulle can be tolerated – the U S knew long before 30 May which side the French Establishment would be on in the end.

All the while, US forces – whether the State Department, the CIA, or private agencies and foundations – work to keep the system running smoothly and prepare for future problems. The analogue to the seduction of the European non-communist 'Left' during the Fifties is now the courting of anti-revolutionary 'militants'. In London recently, a very bright and effective young coloured activist told me that, despite his Leftist associations, he had just received a US visa and the promise of a State Department 'leadership grant' to study American racial problems. There are reports in Paris now that active but non-revolutionary students are getting the same treatment. Volumes can (and are) being written about the extent of the US imperial system and its internal dynamic. People are digging in for the long fight – not because they are anti-American (although they may be that, too) but because they have realized that their first priority is their own independence.

Now the events of the last few months suggest that perhaps America is not invincible. The Vietnamese provide one proof, the student revolts in the West indicate that the young, at least, are wise to America's purposes. Anti-imperialism is a basic component of all the university rebellions, just as anti-Stalinism – pro-independence – was at the bottom of the revolts in Eastern Europe. It is no wonder that President Johnson and Premier Kosygin find each other so comforting these days.

All Systems Fail !

New Statesman 4.8.67

Those who did not live before the revolution will never know the sweetness of life, Talleyrand said, and perhaps for such knowledge there is a desperate sweetness as the disaster spreads in this summer of the American crack-up. *Sergeant Pepper* blares from ten million phonographs, they're feeding the bears in Yellowstone Park, and the odour of barbecue wafting over the suburbs is suddenly mixed with the fragrance of pot. Hear it, see it, smell it while there is still time. For although there will be no revolution in the ordinary sense, the quality of life in the society – the values, the expectations, the perceptions – is radically changing. Things are not likely to be so sweet again.

For people who have difficulty seeing it clearly, the gods have created a ghastly metaphor in the disaster of the *USS Forrestal*. That mighty engine of war, that marvel of technology, that brilliantly-organized institution exploded and burned not from enemy attack but from its own mundane malfunction. As an aeroplane prepared to take off for North Vietnam on a bombing mission, fire from its jet afterburner ignited a missile on a nearby plane. Then its fuel tank exploded, and a chain-reaction of explosions was set in motion. We have been accustomed to think about America as the same kind of invulnerable fortress of power and technique. It is a tightly-run ship, resilient and flexible when necessary, but always under control. If bugs develop, they can be worked out: if attack threatens, it can be resisted. But now the

bombs are bursting and the flames are shooting. The well-laid plans cannot be followed, the fail-safes fail. The technological marvels have only limited value, if that: perhaps they do more harm than good. Above all, the institution is vulnerable to its own internal Snafus. One blast can set off a chain-reaction that can destroy the whole system.

It is always hard to describe the moment of failure from the inside, and harder still to see what led to it. The crack-up is terribly complex. For twenty years the arrangements of the American system worked well enough to maintain control. Classes were roughly balanced, status was generously apportioned and demands for mobility were generally satisfied. The ideology of liberal corporatism, which is another way of saying 'the American way of life', was neatly developed by established intellectuals like Stevenson and Schlesinger, and diffused by any number of agents – from the CIA to the *New York Times*, the great universities and the massive corporations. Resistance was unsubtly crushed by the anti-communist purges of the late Forties and McCarthyism in the early Fifties. After that the methods were subtler. It was clear sailing, or so it seemed.

The first problems, however, were noticed almost as soon as the process of consolidation began. Cracks were discovered in the picture-window of middle-class life: it somehow was not the utopia everyone had predicted. In the early days the trouble was called phoniness (by J. D. Salinger) or other-directedness (by David Riesman) or status-seeking or apathy. Now the terms are powerlessness and alienation, but the idea is the same: ordinary people are helpless to find expression or achieve participation in the huge governmental and corporate bureaucracies which control their lives. The system was still working

well enough to make protest against that condition seem unreasonable. For instance, students in the Fifties may not have been entirely happy about what was in store for them, but they were compliant and 'silent'. They slipped easily into the army and into IBM because there were no obvious alternatives. It was best to be cool.

The next problem was not so easy to ignore. For 300 years black people had been slaves, or as good as slaves, in the U.S. They neither demanded liberation nor were granted it. All of a sudden they were in the streets – boycotting the bus lines in Montgomery, Alabama, in 1956, and sitting-in and freedom-riding through the South a few years later. They were pushed both by the force of world-wide anti-colonialism (the US Negro movement coincided exactly with the African experience) and the vast discrepancy between the promise of American life and its reality for the huge under-class of the poor. Whites were victimized too, but Negroes had a heightened consciousness of their position in a racist country.

The example of a whole class of people aroused and marching to protest their powerlessness energized a new generation of white students – and later their elders – to do the same. In his brief years, John Kennedy tried to use that new spirit by employing its compelling rhetoric. Lyndon Johnson may have toyed with the idea of emulating his predecessor, but he never got very far. For one thing, he did not have the foggiest idea of what it was all about, and for another, he had to act in a number of ways to deny the legitimacy of the best rhetorical figures. He proclaimed the doctrine of community action and the 'participation of the poor' (according to a script written by Kennedy men) but conveniently forgot it all when his larger political interests were threatened. At length the sense of impotence throughout the whole society grew so

strong, and the sense of imminent disaster became so overpowering, that the revolt of the 'slaves' began: in the streets of the black ghetto, in the suburbs, in the churches, in the universities.

It has come to a head, although hardly a conclusion, this summer with the urban insurrection. But what is most startling is the complete failure of the collective leadership – the politicians, the bureaucrats, the corporate managers, the liberal élites – to save the system. What appeared two years ago to be the most successful state power structure in history turns out to be a paper tiger. There is neither resiliency nor determination and no genius at all. The old intellectuals have been discredited by the CIA disclosures, by the irrelevance of their anti-communist doctrine, and by the failure of their strategies for reform to coincide with the realities of power. The politicians have been discredited simply because their solutions have failed to meet the society's most distressing problems: imperialism, war, racism, poverty, powerlessness.

There is certainly nothing new about such failure. Systems fail, crises arise, and changes – often violent – are made. How violent America's change will be is uncertain, but it is perhaps foreshadowed by the summer's events. In Los Angeles, during the demonstrations against L B J, whites fought back against police for the first time since the labour wars of the last era. The black uprisings are among the bloodiest civil conflicts in the nation's history. Already cities have been occupied 'preventively' by troops, and civil liberties have been suspended before riots begin. It is not unlikely that in the next months or years vast urban areas will be under long-term military rule.

There is really no way of knowing where it will lead.

No one could have seen the end of the chain-reaction on the *Forrestal* when the first missile exploded. What is clear, however, is that there is a tremendous amount of energy left in America, even if there is little at the top. This is not Rome in the time of the barbarians, nor even Britain at the end of empire. If there is greatness here it consists of that intense vitality and sense of purpose. In lots of ways, America is swinging.

Postscript

Throughout 1968 there was a feeling in America that the presidential election would somehow redirect – or at least redefine – the politics of a decade. Very little happened during the year that was not focused on, or by, the presidential campaign. Despite the reasonable judgement that no ‘real choice’ existed between the major candidates, the smartest and richest people could talk of little else but presidentialism during the last several weeks of the long contest. On the great day in November, of course, the earth did not move. The cosmic shift that had been half-expected was fully missed; the waters did not change their course. From the tone of conversation during the next few days – and from the hot and cold media commentaries – it seemed that the country (Nixon opponents and supporters) was let down: disappointed not so much by what happened as by what did not happen.

When President Johnson withdrew from the re-election campaign in March, one great epochal shoe dropped, and for seven months America had waited for its mate to fall. It never did. In the journalistic formulation (the only one possible now), ‘the Sixties’ ended with Johnson’s speech. At that moment, the chairman of America’s board of governing powers admitted that its *politique* of ‘warfare liberalism’ had failed. Politics as currently constituted could not deal with the major domestic and foreign problems. The scramble for a ‘new politics’ – that is, a new way of assembling and organizing power – began in earnest at that point. There had been no lack of ideas for new

policies: they lie around government offices, social-action foundations, and university centres in superfluity. The trick was to put together a new coalition of political forces in back of reformist policies (no one even thought seriously about more radical institutional change). For example, ideas for eliminating poverty in various areas of American life have been current for years. What eludes the policy-makers is the knack of building a political mechanism of anti-poverty interests strong enough to overcome the domination of those who are, objectively if not consciously, pro-poverty.

The major candidates of both parties tried to mould a new politics according to their fashions. The McCarthy campaign fancied a machine (called a 'movement') run by the liberal, well-educated 'New Class' and driven by the energy of opposition to the war in Vietnam. The Humphrey people tried to revive the old Democratic Party coalition of labour-liberals-nationalities-blacks, with added emphasis on ghetto-power. Nixon, like McCarthy, saw that his political future lay in white suburbia, but among the more conservative and protective elements.

An expectancy of change grew out of the dynamic of a search for the 'new politics', a kind of quest-epic which had to end on schedule on 5 November. Disappointment followed when the search produced nothing new. All the found objects were cast in the old forms. Humphrey's coalition was virtually indistinguishable from Roosevelt's, Truman's or Johnson's – except that crucial sections had fallen away. McCarthy and Nixon were both relying on a Fifties phenomenon – the ascendancy of the suburban élite. John Kennedy had used that class already in 1960. In their separate ways, Nixon and McCarthy both sought its allegiance, and if they had contested each other

directly, 1968 would have been a delayed-replay of 1960. McCarthy would probably have won: precisely because he could recapture the old spirit, not because he could fashion the new.

In one sense, Nixon's election defied the logic (though not any law) of American politics. The conservative wing of the New Class should not be a sufficient agent of victory in a national election, although it might be an important constituency in a winning coalition. But the big money and the big bloc-votes prefer national candidates whose administrations are committed to economic expansion and social stability. Kennedy won in 1960 because he promised the managers of the most advanced corporate sectors that he would promote expansion with relatively painless neo-Keynesian controls. Johnson overwhelmed Goldwater four years later because his ideas for social control – more and better 'welfare' – seemed more likely to work than repression and retrenchment. Besides, Johnson symbolized the same methods of control on a global scale (foreign aid, Peace Corps, subtle counter-insurgency) while Goldwater was equated with nuclear holocaust. Nixon in 1968 was surely more acceptable than Goldwater in 1964, but the fear persisted that Nixon might cut government expenditure, increase unemployment levels, decelerate welfare programmes, and bluster about the world with anti-communist interventions. At the very end of the presidential campaign, there was a mighty surge of corporate and labour support for Humphrey – in terms of money and political pressure. It worked on political leaders as well as ordinary voters: Johnson raced to stop the bombing of North Vietnam, McCarthy and his supporters fell in with Humphrey, and rank-and-file union members were herded into Democratic Party lines. Given a week more of such activity, and Humphrey might have won. Nixon kept

quiet and barely won; now he is preparing to enter the White House as a kind of historical anomaly.

No doubt Nixon will turn out all right for the Great Powers, or at least as well as can be expected, and their worst fears will be seen to have been wasted. In the days after the election he began moving to pacify his 'liberal establishment' flank – to reassure the McCarthy liberals, the Negro leaders, the union bosses, the corporate managers. What cannot be expected, however, is that he can do much about the real flaws in the American system which 'toppled' the old political régime in March.

The recurrent theme – the nightmare – of the Sixties was the revelation of those faults in ways Americans had never seen before. It is hard to believe that poverty was 'discovered' in the US only six years ago (the germinal event was Dwight MacDonald's review of Michael Harrington's book *The Other America*, in the *New Yorker* magazine). The depth of the race crisis was first felt in the Birmingham, Alabama, demonstrations in 1963. The nature of middle-class alienation was not even conceived until the student strikes and the hippie putsches of 1967 and 1968. The consequences of America's advancing empire – even in the most virulent forms – were not glimpsed until the war in Vietnam had already become genocidal.

The social and political movements which grew in the Sixties were reactions to those revelations, collective awakenings from the American dream and militant confrontations with American reality. Until 1968 the movements were by and large optimistic. But there's no more of that now. Johnson 'resigned' in March because he could offer no credible alternatives. His aspiring successors tried to conjure up their own solutions all spring and summer, to no discernible effect. Nixon, finally, was elected as a caretaker – a 'Fourth Republic' figure in American terms,

with predetermined limits to his success and failure. What will happen to the social forces energized by the revelations of the Sixties is so far impossible to predict: already there are signs of increased 'alienation' from traditional institutional ways of dealing with problems – expressed in both revolutionism and withdrawal. It's past the time of demonstrating at City Hall for better conditions, when city machines themselves are seen as vehicles of illegitimate authority. Why 'reform' a political party that cannot theoretically free itself from the complex of 'power élites'? All at once, politics seems desperate, but for all its protests and confrontations, the decade of the Sixties never faced the issue of political despair. Now it cannot be escaped.

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Norman Mailer

When a powerful novelist (described by Robert Lowell as 'the best journalist in America') confronts the most important Presidential conventions in recent politics, the impact is bound to be explosive. Following his triumph with *The Armies of the Night* Norman Mailer here conjures the raucous vulgarity of the Republican convention, held in the sweltering heat of Miami, and pinpoints just what is new about the 'New Nixon'. Moving to the charnel-house city of Chicago, he captures in brilliant glimpses of frustration and anguish the mood of the Democratic convention, and analyses the peculiar amalgam of bland cynicism and naked power which is the essence of Mayor Daley's party machine. Then violence spills onto the streets. Protesters are pounded, gassed, trampled and hurled from the pavements by Daley's police. And, as reporter turns protagonist, the story of the Chicago convention becomes the story of Mailer's involvement in the most extraordinary sequence of political events since the assassination of Robert Kennedy.

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Black Power

Stokely Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton

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This is how the authors sum up their book which, they admit, contains statements that most white and some black people would prefer not to hear. Yet no one should ignore their urgent call for a process of political modernization which would raise black people in America to a status economically, politically, and socially equal to whites.

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Since the Statue of Liberty came under fire from the home shore, deep cracks have appeared in the plinth. Inextricable involvement in Vietnam, the rising temperature of racial strife, the assassination of public figures have combined with other factors to breed a mood of resistance to the 'system' which was once a 'way of life'.

Andrew Kopkind's trenchant comments on American politics – the reflection of a human attitude rather than of any hard-and-fast theory – are already known in England through his articles in the *New Statesman*. Some of these, linked with others which have been printed in American periodicals, form the body of this Penguin Special. They yield a recognizable picture of American society at a crucial moment in its evolution – a picture sharply focused through the eyes of one of the most incisive young political commentators in the States.

These pieces on American political leaders, the party conventions, the race war, and the precarious American empire were mostly written 'on the road' by a working journalist, who has added a considered analysis of the Presidential election. Often assertive, always graphic, they forcefully convey the sense of social fragmentation which pervades America today.

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